

# ST. NICHOLAS.

VOL. I.

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No. 3.

## CHRISTMAS ANGELS.

BY DONALD G. MITCHELL.

I FEEL like a savage—indeed I do ; like Captain Kidd with his knife whetted sharp, “as he sailed, as he sailed,” and the Christmas duns are coming in (you’ll know what duns are soon enough without looking in your dictionaries).

And A—— has promised to pay, and does n’t pay ; and B—— has promised to pay, and does n’t pay. And Sligo & Co., who had a few hundred dollars of ours—laid up for a wet day—have suspended : (you’ll know what that word means too, if you live long enough).

Yet all the while, just beside me, where I am writing, I can see a white winged Christmas angel, with a star upon her forehead and hand uplifted, is warbling a Christmas carol :—

“And all the angels in heaven do sing,  
On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;  
And all the angels in heaven do sing,  
On Christmas day in the morning.”

“Rat—tat—tat.” Somebody has come up to the door with his small bill ; and would Mr. ——  
“be so kind as to give a cheque ?”

—“And all the souls on earth do sing,  
On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;  
And all the souls on earth do sing,  
On Christmas day in the morning.”

Shall the angels carry the day ? or, shall Captain Kidd ?

There is a little gush of song from below, where piping voices are putting themselves in trim for a Christmas anthem, and it floats up the stairs and fills the upper hall, and blends softly and gently with other voices that I seem to hear above the house-tops, carrying along through the wintry

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skies the first great Christmas carol of "Peace and good-will to men."

That was what the shepherds heard, you know, as they lay out of doors at night on the hillside somewhere in Judea. And I suppose the angels that sang it have been singing it ever since, on every Christmas night (eighteen hundred and seventy-three of them)—if we could only hear it. The singing master's rules can't make you hear it; nor what he calls an ear for music. There are hard-handed men and tender-hearted women whom I know, who could n't tell Old Hundred from the last new opera tune—and yet they have so taken up the burden of that old, first carol of the Christmas angels into their ears and heads and hearts, that they go echoing it in every step of their march through life.

The angels may talk in songs, perhaps; who knows? But *we* don't. There's a great deal of Christmas music that does n't get sung, nor yet tripped off from the keys of Miss Gertrude's piano.

"What sort of music, then?" says Miss Gertrude, in a maze.

Well, there is the click of needles that goes to the knitting of some warm worsted muffler for grandmamma; there is the earnest "Thank ye ma'am" from the old crone in the edge of the wood, who gets a fat fowl for her dinner that one day in the year; there is the stifled whispering of a crew of little voices, which covers—or tries to cover—some grand scheme of a gift that is to lie all revealed and dazzling on mamma's plate on Christmas morning; there are the thousand kind words of greeting and cheer drifting about in all the mailbags of Christmas time, making the leathern pouches fuller of music than even the Scotch bagpipes. For once, too, there is music in the school-master's voice as he says, "The boys and girls may have a holiday!"

Then there are the stealthy footfalls of that dear, tender-hearted mistress of the household as she gropes her way, past midnight, from chamber to chamber, bearing gifts heaped up and running over for the little slumberers—not waking these; but surely those quiet, stealthy, kindly footfalls of hers shall waken echoes for the blithest carols that any of the angels can sing.

For one, I don't believe that all the angels who hover near the earth at Christmas time are grown-up angels, though the painters may make them so. I think there are little half-formed, piping voices that make themselves heard from out all the Christmas carolings, more clearly and distinctly, for many a listening ear, than if they were full-grown voices.

I dare say you do not know why I should say this, or what I mean by it. I can fancy that Miss

Gertrude or Miss Alice are all agape with wonderment.

But listen for a moment.

Do you know of any little private drawer, where you young people may not venture; and have you ever caught sight in it of a tiny pair of half-worn morocco shoes, which you know can fit no one—no one of the living—and have you ever caught chance sight of a certain loved figure bowed down over that private drawer; and hurrying away, as if you had no right there, have you glanced furtively afterward at your mother's face to see if there were signs of tears?

Yes, there are Christmas angels, who are not half grown; and their childish voices in the sweet Christmas tunes, change the plaint of a mother into carols of joy.

I think there are *old* Christmas angels too, whatever the painters may say.

At this, Miss Gertrude rolls her eyes in wonderment again.

Have n't you or I had, some day, a darling old grandmother, who wore spectacles, perhaps, but who had a peach bloom upon her cheek, that told of great beauty in her younger days; not over tall, but with a walk that was almost stately for its dignity? Then, she had such far-seeing, kindly eyes, we could never escape them; we never wanted to escape them; they had such a sweet, inviting fondness in them. She did not make her home with us; otherwise, I think we should have outgrown a little awe that always came over us in her presence. Yet it was an awe that was full of tenderness.

Jeanette, who was the clever one among us, said she did n't quite know whether she felt most fear or love of grandmamma: but she could never be in the room with her a half hour, and hear her talk as she was used to talk, without running up and throwing her arms around her neck in such a headlong way as put all the old lady's ruffles (for which she had a vanity) in danger.

I think Jeanette was the grandmother's favorite.

But when the Christmas box came—as it was sure to come—bless me, there was no favoritism there.

Dick had his ball—we knew what fingers had sewed up its morocco cover; Fred has his top, and a host of nick-nacks besides; and there were tidbits of all sorts, and candies running over; but for each child, whatever that child's fancy would most have coveted, and with every gift a line of writing in that dear hand—overlooked then, in that Christmas gale of frolic, but dearly remembered now.

Does anybody who ever had such a grandmamma doubt that she is among the Christmas angels?

(I must own to you, my youngsters, that I had

quite forgotten the Captain and his sharp knife, but will tell you more of him some day.)

Meantime, I am sure that on these—of whom we have been talking—and such as these, brightening

their lives with kindly deeds of cheer and of goodwill—whether young or old, living or dying—in Christmas times, and in all times, a great light shall shine forever more.



## THE LAST FLOWER OF THE YEAR.

BY LUCY LARCOM.

THE gentian was the year's last child,  
Born when the winds were hoarse and wild  
With wailing over buried flowers,  
The playmates of their sunnier hours.

The gentian hid a thoughtful eye  
Beneath deep fringes, blue and shy;  
Only by warmest noon-beams won,  
To meet the welcome of the sun.

The gentian, her long lashes through,  
Looked up into the sky so blue,  
And felt at home—the color, there,  
The good God gave herself to wear.

The gentian searched the fields around;  
No flower-companion there she found.  
Upward, from all the woodland ways,  
Floated the aster's silvery rays.

The gentian shut her eyelids tight  
On falling leaf and frosty night;  
And close her azure mantle drew,  
While dreary winds around her blew.

The gentian said, "The world is cold;  
Yet one clear glimpse of heaven I hold.  
The sun's last thought is mine to keep;  
Enough—now let me go to sleep."



THE MAN WHO SAT THE OLD YEAR OUT.

## THE ELVES' GIFT.

*The Veritable Narrative of Thomas Graspen.*

BY ARTHUR CROSBY.

IT was very cold, so cold that all about the old farm house that day—though the sun had been shining his brightest—the icicles had hung motionless, except, perhaps, in one snug little corner, where the leafless wistaria trails over the dining-room window, and the rose-bushes in their overcoats of straw looked so comfortable and warm. Into that cozy nook the sun always rushed with such an earnest good will, and lingered there so cheerily, that the coldest-hearted icicle in the world could hardly hold out against him. But on that day, before Christmas, I am not sure but even there the icicles were unyielding, it was so bitter cold. There had been a thaw the previous day, but now the deep snow was crusted over so firmly that

the children could play on the top of it, without any chance of breaking through. Of course, this was grand fun. They were muffled up in scarfs, and tippets, and leggins, until they looked like so many laughing worsted balls. How their red cheeks shone, and their bright eyes sparkled! How they rolled, and tumbled, and screamed! and little Peter (he was just six) actually had to lie on his back and kick his fat legs in the air, he felt so good.

But for Tom Graspen, this was all too childish. Why? Tom was a big boy. He was eleven last August, and he was not going to play on the snow with the children, while "the boys" were all going skating on the mill-pond—not he.

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The plan that afternoon, was to stay late, for there would be a splendid moon.

What sport they had as they made the hard ice ring beneath their steel-clad feet! To be sure, Tom was n't quite satisfied; he liked the fine skating well enough, but he seemed to want summer weather with it, and that, of course, was quite out of the question; then his skates, excellent as they were, were not of the tip-top, very best and latest make, and that troubled him. However, all the other boys were in such glee it did n't make much matter. They raced, they played "Cross the Line," and "Fox and Geese" until the blood fairly leaped through their young veins. And then when the sun had set and the moonlight came, it was like a dream of fairy-land to glide over the smooth, gleaming ice.

It was glorious! The very air was full of Christmas gladness. But all things must end; and at last the skaters knew their time was up; and so, reluctantly taking off their skates, they set out for home.

For a little way up the lane they all kept together, but when they reached the main road, Will, and Harry and Bob, and the rest, went in one direction, while our friend Tom had about a mile of lonely road, right through the woods, to walk, all by himself. To tell the truth, he did n't like it much. He was not a bit afraid! Oh, no, indeed—but then, you know, he would just a little rather have had hold of his father's hand. However, he slung his skates over his shoulder, and shoved his hands very deep into his overcoat pockets, and began to whistle very loud, and walk just as fast as his tired legs would let him.

He had gone perhaps half of the way home, when suddenly he thought he heard some one calling, "Tom, Tom!"

I tell you he stopped short, and his heart was right up in his throat, as he looked about him in every direction. But as he could not see any one, he made up his mind that it must have been the ice cracking in the brook, or some belated squirrel taking a lonely supper in the trees. So he started off again, whistling louder than ever.

"Tom, Tom," called the same voice. And this time it was so distinct and so near that he thought some one must be speaking to him from the ground. He looked down, and there on the white snow, at his feet, clearly seen in the soft moonlight, was a little man not more than six inches high, with a long white beard that reached to his knees.

He was dressed in a beautiful flowing robe, made all of Autumn leaves, and he had on his feet the cunningest little boots, cut out of hickory nuts, and a jaunty cap of snow-bird's feathers, and on the cap a tiny crown that glistened and sparkled with frozen

dew-drops; while in his hand he carried for a sceptre a sweet-briar thorn.

Tom gazed at him in utter bewilderment, and rubbed his eyes and thought it must be a dream; but there the little fellow stood, with a merry twinkle in his eye, and a right cheery ring in his clear, shrill voice, as he beckoned to Tom and sang:

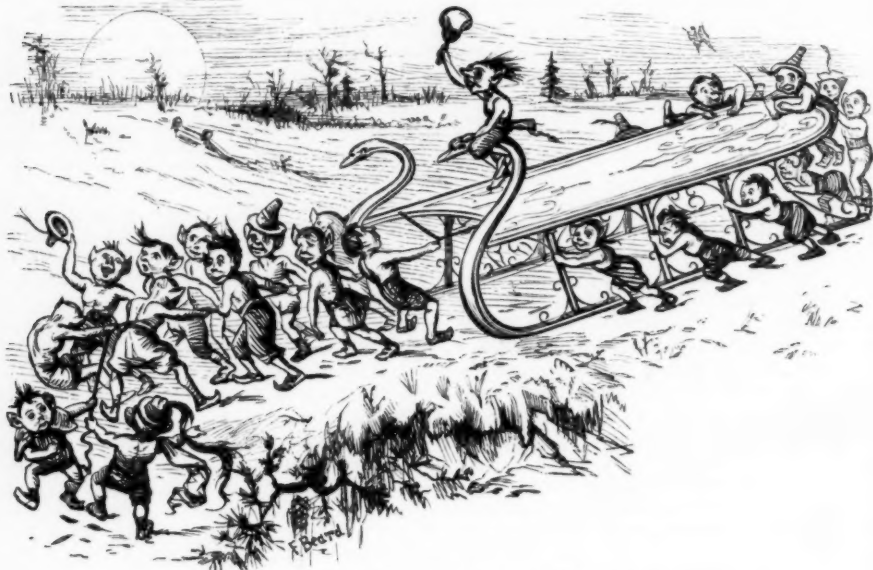
"O Tommy! O Tommy! don't stand there and shake;  
But follow me quick and your fortune you 'll make;  
Of all Christmas fairies I 'm chief and I 'm king,  
And 't is I and my elfins the church bells who ring.  
We climb the steep steeple with laughter and song,  
And merrily spring on the ponderous ring;  
Then with a 'heave-ho' the huge clapper we raise,  
And thus gleefully hail the gladdest of days.  
But my moonbeam is waiting; for, Tom, you must know,  
That when king-fairies ride, on moonbeams they go.  
So Tom, you young rascal, don't stand there and shake,  
But follow me quick and your fortune you 'll make."

Beckoning again, the elfin king started off through the woods, and Tom, who by this time had almost recovered from his fright, followed after as fast as he could. Several times he lost sight of his little majesty, and was about to turn back, but each time he would hear the shrill voice just ahead of him calling, "Tom, Tom," and then his royal highness would come shimmering back, and tell him to hurry along. At length they reached a little hollow under a couple of old oak trees, where the snow had drifted two or three feet deep. "Wait a minute," said the elf, and disappeared. Our hero waited and waited, when, just as he was about to give it all up and go home, he saw king fairy's dew-drop crown appear out of a hole in the snow-crust that he had not before noticed. "Come now," said the tiny monarch, "and see the fairies' Christmas tree." So Tom got down on his hands and knees and looked into the hole, and oh! what a magnificent sight was before his eyes! A broad flight of stairs, cut in the soft snow, led down into a large square hall with arched corridors on every side. At the side opposite the stairway the king sat on his throne, which was beautifully carved, in fantastic shapes, from a single huge icicle; while a hundred little fellows, even smaller than their lord, danced gaily on the moss-covered floor, while, with shrill piping voices they sang a weird melody. Right in the centre stood a miniature hemlock tree, lighted, Tom knew not how, but so brilliantly that the diamonds, and rubies, and precious stones of all sorts with which the tree was loaded, glistened till Tom's eyes were fairly dazzled. Presently the king waived his briar-thorn sceptre, and as soon as silence was restored, addressed his subjects:—"Most mighty and magnanimous people," he said, "children of the moonlight, offspring of the snow-flake! On this our Christmas eve, I have, accord-

ing to our time-honored custom, brought here one little boy to share our sports and to receive a token of the fairies' kindness. Make haste and bear aloft the appointed gift."

Upon this about twenty of them, after bowing low before the throne, skipped off down one of the side corridors, but immediately returned, drawing after them a most beautiful hand sled—all carved and painted with exquisite taste, but no larger than an

to please him, he began to look sour and grumble, "Is that all?" The words had hardly passed his lips when the cord of his new sled slipped from his hands; the sled grew small in a twinkling, and he had barely time to see the fairies hurrying back with it into the palace of snow, when a great thick cloud came over the moon, and in the darkness he began to feel a multitude of little pinches and pricks in feet and legs, as if a whole bee-hive had



"NOW THE LITTLE FELLOWS HAD TO TUG AND PULL."

oyster shell; and as they came merrily on, with many a jest and laugh, the others clapped their hands and shouted joyously from very gladness and kindness of heart.

When they had climbed the stairs and passed through the entrance out to where Tom was now standing, the sled began suddenly to grow, and grow, until in a few moments, it was quite large enough for any boy to use. And now the little fellows had to tug and pull until they were red in the face, but they only seemed to enjoy it the more; and struggling manfully on, placed the golden cord in Tom's hand with a right cheery "Merry Christmas."

Now, Tom was, in most respects, an unusually good boy; but, as you have seen, he had one very serious fault: he was never satisfied with any thing that was given to him, but always wanted "something more." And so, now, instead of being grateful to the kind little elves, who had taken such pains

broken loose, and a wasp or two besides, while a chorus of angry voices sang:

"Pinch him, and twitch him, and prick him with pins.  
And jump on his toes and hammer his shins.  
Send him home to his mother all tired and sore,  
For Tom Graspen to-night has been asking for more.  
These punishing pinches he 'll never forget,  
But be thankful hereafter for what he can get."

How Tom reached home and got into his warm bed he hardly knew himself, but he woke up almost another boy on the bright Christmas morning. Everything charmed him. His presents were "just the thing," and his best friends were astonished to see him so thoroughly satisfied. In short, ever afterwards, when he felt inclined to grumble, the thought of the fairy sled and those pinches and pricks would change his sour looks into a smile of thankfulness.

As for the elves, when their king saw how disap-

pointed they were at Tom's bad behavior, he gave them permission to disguise themselves as little boys, and take their pockets full of gold to a poor cottager and his wife who lived on the edge of the great forest.

"Great Land!" cried the delighted wife, as the elves skipped away from the house. "Them children, wherever they come from, was all lighted up with Christmas!" And her goodman thought he heard far-away voices singing:

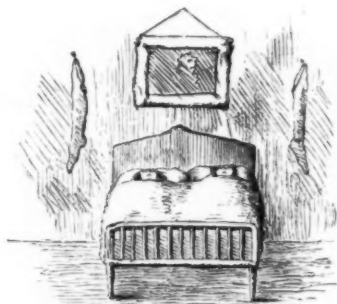
"Tom, Tom was not content,  
So to a better man we went.  
Hi and a-ho, it is well to go  
With welcome gifts  
To the poor and low-  
Ly—ah—ly—ah!"



## THE TRANSFORMED STOCKINGS.

(A Poem in two parts, with illustrations by the poet.)

BY MASTER SAM QUIMBY.



### PART I.

#### CHRISTMAS EVE.

LITTLE children in their bed,  
Both their stockings on the wall;  
Not a thought disturbs their dreams—  
That is, if they dream at all.



### PART II.

#### CHRISTMAS MORNING.

WHEN the Christmas morning comes,  
Both the children bounce from bed:  
"Wh—ce, —cw!"  
That was all the children said.

## WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED.

BY FRANK R. STOCKTON.

## CHAPTER VI.

## TONY STRIKES OUT.

THERE was no doubt about it; something *was* moving. There was a rise in the ground a short distance in front of the turkey-blind, and a little patch of dark sky was visible between the trees. Across this bit of sky something dark was slowly passing.

"Ye kin see 'most anything in the darkest night," whispered Tony, "ef ye kin only git the sky behind it. But that's no turkey."

"What do you think it is?" said Harry, softly. "It's big enough for a turkey."

"Too big," said Tony. "Let's git after it. You slip along the path, and I'll go round ahead of it. Feel yer way, and do n't make no noise if ye run agin anything. And mind this"—and here Tony spoke in one of the most impressive of whispers—"do n't you fire till yer *dead certain* what it is."

With this Tony slipped away into the darkness, and Harry, grasping his gun, set out to feel his way. He felt his way along the path for a short time, and then he felt his way out of it. Then he crept into a low, soft place, full of ferns, and out of that he carefully felt his way into a big bush, where he knocked off his hat. When he found his hat, which took him some time, he gradually worked himself out into a place where the woods were a little more open, and there he caught another glimpse of the sky just at the top of the ridge. There was something dark against the sky, and Harry watched it for a long time. At last, as it did not move at all, he came to the conclusion that it must be a bush, and he was entirely correct. For an hour or two he quietly crept among the trees, hoping he would either find the thing that was moving or get back to the turkey-blind. Several times something that he was sure was an "old har," as hares are often called in Virginia, rushed out of the bushes near him; and once he heard a quick rustling among the dead leaves that sounded as if it were made by a black snake, but it might as well have been a Chinese pagoda on wheels, for all he could see of it. At last he became very tired, and sat down to rest with his back against a big tree. There he soon began to nod, and, without the slightest intention of doing anything of the kind, he went to sleep, and slept just as soundly as if he had been in his bed at home. And this was not at all

surprising, considering the amount of walking and creeping that he had done that day and night.

When he awoke it was daylight. He sprang to his feet and found he was very stiff in the legs, but that did not prevent him from running this way and that to try and find some place in the woods with which he was familiar. Before long he heard what he thought was something splashing in water, and, making his way towards the sound, he pushed out on the bank of Crooked Creek.

The creek was quite wide at this point, and, out near the middle of it, he saw Tony's head. The turkey-hunter was swimming hand-over-hand, "dog-fashion," for the shore. Behind him was a boat, upside down, which seemed just on the point of sinking out of sight.

"Hel-low, there!" cried Harry; "what's the matter, Tony?"

Tony never answered a word, but spluttered and puffed, and struck out slowly but vigorously for the bank.

"Wait a minute," cried Harry, wildly excited, "I'll reach you a pole."

But Tony did not wait, and Harry could find no pole. When he turned around from his hurried search among the bushes, the turkey-hunter had found bottom, and was standing with his head out of water. But the bottom was soft and muddy, and he flopped about dolefully when he attempted to walk to the bank. Harry reached his gun out towards him, but Tony, with a quick jerk of his arm, motioned it away.

"I'd rather be drowned than shot," he spluttered. "I do n't want no gun-muzzles pintoed at me. Take a hold of that little tree, and then reach me your other hand."

Harry seized a young tree that grew on the very edge of the bank, and as soon as Tony managed to flop himself near enough, Harry leaned over and took hold of his outstretched hand and gave him a jerk forward with all his strength. Over went Tony, splash on his face in the water, and Harry came very near going in head-foremost on top of him. But he recovered himself, and, not having loosed his grip of Tony's hand, he succeeded, with a mighty effort, in dragging the turkey-hunter's head out of the water; and, after a desperate struggle with the mud, Tony managed to get on his feet again.

"I do n't know," said he, blowing the water out of his mouth and shaking his dripping head, "but

what I'd 'most as lieve be shot as ducked that way. Don't you jerk so hard again. Hold steady and let me pull."

Harry took a still firmer grasp of the tree and "held steady," while Tony gradually worked his feet through the sticky mud until he reached the bank, and then he laboriously clambered on shore.

"How did it happen?" said Harry: "How did you get in the water?"

"Boat upset," said Tony, seating himself, all dripping with water and mud, upon the bank.

"Why, you came near being drowned," said Harry, anxiously.

"No I did n't," answered Tony, pulling a big

creek till I got opposite John Walker's cabin, where it's narrow, and there's a big tree a-lyin' across—"

"Still following that thing?" interrupted Harry.

"Yes," said Tony; "an' then I got over on the tree and kep' down the creek—"

"Still following?" asked Harry.

"Yes; and I got a long ways down, and had one bad tumble, too, in a dirty little gulley; and it was pretty nigh day when I turned to come back. An' then when I got up here I thought I would look fur John Walker's boat—fur I knew he kept it tied up somewhere down this way—and save myself all that walk. I found the ole boat—"



THE TURKEY-HUNTER IN TROUBLE.

bunch of weeds and rubbing his legs with them. "I kin swim well enough, but a fellar has a rough time in the water with big boots on and his pockets full o' buck-shot."

"Could n't you empty the shot out?" asked Harry.

"And lose it all?" asked Tony, with an aggrieved expression upon his watery face.

"But how did it happen?" Harry earnestly inquired: "What were you doing in the boat?"

Tony did not immediately answer. He rubbed at his legs, and then he tried to wipe his face with his wet coat-sleeve, but finding that only made matters worse, he accepted Harry's offer of his handkerchief, and soon got his countenance into talking order.

"Why, you see," said he, "I kept on up the

"And how did it upset?" said Harry.

"Humph!" said Tony; "easy enough. I had n't nuthin to row with but a bit o' pole, and I got a sorter cross a-gettin' along so slow, and so I stood up and gin a big push, and one foot slipped an' over she went."

"And in you went!" said Harry.

"Yes—in I went. I don't see what ever put John Walker up to makin' sich a boat as that. It's jist the meanest, lopsidedest, low-borndedst boat I ever did see."

"I don't wonder you think so," said Harry, laughing; "but if I were you, I'd go home as soon as I could, and get some dry clothes."

"That's so," said Tony, rising; "these feel like the inside of an eel-skin."

"Oh, Tony!" said Harry, as they walked along



up the creek, "did you find out what that thing was?"

"Yes, I did," answered Tony.

"And what was it?"

"It was Captain Caseby."

"Captain Caseby?" cried Harry.

"Yes; jist him, and nuthin else. It was his head we seen agin the sky, as he was a-walkin' on the other side of that little ridge."

"Captain Caseby!" again ejaculated Harry in his amazement.

"Yes, sir!" said Tony; "an' I'm glad I found it out before I crossed the creek, for my gun was n't no further use, an' it was only in my way, so I left it in the bushes up here. Ef it had n't been for that, the ole rifle would ha' been at the bottom of the creek."

"But what was Captain Caseby doing here in the woods at night?" asked Harry.

"Dunno," said Tony; "I jist follered him till I made sure he was n't a-huntin' for my turkey-blind, and then I let him go 'long. His business was n't no consarn o' mine."

When Tony and Harry had nearly reached the village, who should they meet, at a cross-road in the woods, but Mr. Loudon and Captain Caseby!

"Ho, ho!" cried the Captain, "where on earth have you been? Here I've been a-hunting you all night."

"You. have, have you?" said Tony, with a chuckle; "and Harry and I've been a-huntin' you all night, too."

Everybody now began to talk at once. Harry's father was so delighted to find his boy again that he did not care to explain anything, and he and Harry walked off together.

But Captain Caseby told Tony all about it. How he, Mr. Loudon and old Mr. Wagner had set out to look for Harry; how Mr. Wagner soon became so tired that he had to give up, and go home, and how Mr. Loudon had gone through the woods to the north, while he kept down by the creek, searching on both sides of the stream, and how they had both walked, and walked, and walked all night, and had met at last down by the river.

"How did you manage to meet Mr. Loudon?" asked Tony.

"I heard him hollerin," said the Captain. "He hollered pretty near all night, he told me."

"Why did n't you holler?" Tony asked.

"Oh, I never exercise my voice in the night air," said the Captain. "It's against my rules."

"Well, you'd better break your rules next time you go out in the woods where Harry is," said the turkey-hunter, "or he'll pop you over for a turkey or a musk-rat. He's a sharp shot, I kin tell ye."

"You don't really mean he was after me last night with a gun!" exclaimed Captain Caseby.

"He truly was," said Tony; "he was a-trackin' you his Sunday best. It was bad for you that it was so dark that he could n't see what you was, but it might have been worse for ye if it hadn't been so dark that he could n't find ye at all."

"I'm glad I did n't know it," said the Captain, earnestly; "thoroughly and completely glad I did n't know it. I should have yelled all the skin off my throat, if I'd have known he was after me with a gun."

After Harry had been home an hour or two, and Kate had somewhat recovered from her transports of joy, and everybody in the village had heard all about everything that had happened, and Captain Caseby had declared, in the bosom of his family, that he'd never go out into the woods again at night without keeping up a steady "holler," Harry remembered that he had left his sumac bag somewhere in the woods. Hard work for a whole day and a night, and nothing to show for it! Rather a poor prospect for Aunt Matilda.

## CHAPTER VII.

### AUNT MATILDA'S CHRISTMAS.

WHEN Harry and Kate held council that afternoon, their affairs looked a little discouraging. Kate's sumac was weighed and it was only seven pounds! Seven whole cents, if they took it out in trade, or five and a quarter cents, as Kate calculated, if they took cash. A woman as large as Aunt Matilda could not be supported on that kind of an income, it was plain enough.

But our brave boy and girl were not discouraged. Harry went after his bag the next day, and found it with about ten pounds of leaves in it. Then, for a week or two, he and his sister worked hard and sometimes gathered as much as twenty-five pounds of leaves in a day. But they had their bad days, when there was a great deal of walking and very little picking.

And then, in due course of time, school began and the sumac season was at an end, for the leaves are not merchantable after they begin to turn red, although they are then a great deal prettier to look at.

But when Harry went out early in the morning, and on Saturdays, and shot hares and partridges, and Kate began to sell her chickens, of which she had twenty-seven (eighteen died natural deaths, or were killed by weasels during the summer), they found that they made more money than they could have made by sumac gathering.

"It's a good deal for you two to do for that old woman," said Captain Caseby, one day.



"But, didn't we promise to do it?" said Miss Kate, bravely. "We'd do twice as much, if there were two of her."

It was very fortunate, however, that there were not two of her.

Sometimes they had extraordinary luck. Early one November morning Harry was out in the woods and caught sight of a fat wild turkey.

Bang!—one dollar.

That was enough to keep Aunt Matilda for a week.

At least it ought to have kept her. But there was something wrong somewhere. Every week it cost more and more to keep the old colored woman in what Harry called "eating material."

"Her appetite must be increasing," said Harry; "she's eaten two pecks of meal this week."

"I do n't believe it," said Kate; "she could n't do it. I believe she has company."

And this turned out to be true.

On inquiry they found that Uncle Braddock was in the habit of taking his meals with Aunt Matilda, sometimes three times a day. Now, Uncle Braddock had a home of his own where he could get his meals if he chose to go after them, and Harry remonstrated with him on his conduct.

"Why, ye see, Mah'sr Harry," said the old man, "she's so drefful lonesome down dar all by herself, and sometimes it's a-rainin' an' a long way fur me to go home and git me wrapper all wet jist fur one little meal o' wittles. And when I see what you all is a-doin' fur her, I feels dat I oughter try and do somethin' fur her, too, as long as I kin; an' I can't expect to go about much longer, Mah'sr Harry, de ole wrapper's pretty nigh gin out."

"I do n't mind your taking your meals there, now and then," said Harry; "but I do n't want you to live there. We can't afford it."

"All right, Mah'sr Harry," said Uncle Braddock, and after that he never came to Aunt Matilda's to meals more than five or six times a week.

And now Christmas, always a great holiday with the negroes of the South, was approaching, and Harry and Kate determined to try and give Aunt Matilda extra good living during Christmas week, and to let her have company every day if she wanted it.

Harry had a pig. He got it in the Spring when it was very small, and when its little tail was scarcely long enough to curl. There was a story about his getting this pig.

He and some other boys had been out walking, and several dogs went along with them. The dogs chased a cat—a beautiful, smooth cat, that belonged to old Mr. Truly Matthews. The cat put off at the top of her speed, which was a good deal better than any speed the dogs could show, and darted up a tree right in front of her master's house. The dogs

surrounded the tree and barked as if they expected to bark the tree down. One little fuzzy dog, with short legs and hair all over his eyes, actually jumped into a low crotch and the boys thought he was going to try to climb the tree. If he had ever reached the cat he would have been very sorry he had n't stayed at home, for she was a good deal bigger than he was. Harry and his friends endeavored to drive the dogs away from the tree, but it was of no use. Even kicks and blows only made them bark the more. Directly out rushed Mr. Truly Matthews, as angry as he could be. He shouted and scolded at the boys for setting their dogs on his cat, and then he kicked the dogs out of his yard in less time than you could count seventy-two. He was very angry, indeed, and talked about the shocking conduct of the boys to everybody in the village. He would listen to no explanations or excuses.

Harry was extremely sorry that Mr. Matthews was so incensed against him, especially as he knew there was no cause for it, and he was talking about it to Kate one day when she exclaimed:

"I'll tell you what will be sure to pacify Mr. Matthews, Harry. He has a lot of little pigs that he wants to sell. Just you go and buy one of them and see if he isn't as good-natured as ever, when he sees your money."

Harry took the advice. He had a couple of dollars, and with them he bought a little pig, the smallest of the lot; and Mr. Matthews, who was very much afraid he could not find purchasers for all his pigs, was as completely pacified as Kate thought he would be.

Harry took his property home, and all through the Summer and Fall the little pig ran about the yard and the fields and the woods, and ate acorns, —and sweet potatoes, and turnips when he could get a chance to root them up with his funny little twitchy nose,—and grunted and slept in the sun; and about the middle of December he had grown so big that Harry sold him for eleven dollars. Here was quite a capital for Christmas.

"I can't afford to spend it all on Aunt Matilda," said Harry to his mother and Kate, "for I have other things to do with my money. But she's bound to have a good Christmas, and we'll make her a present besides."

Kate was delighted with this idea and immediately began to suggest all sorts of things for the present. If Harry chose to buy anything that she could "make up," she would go right to work at it. But Harry could not think of anything that would suit exactly, and neither could Kate, nor their mother; and when Mr. Loudon was taken into council, at dinner time, he could suggest nothing but an army blanket—which suggestion met with no favor at all.

At last Mr. Loudon advised that they should ask Aunt Matilda what she would like to have for a present.

"There's no better way of suiting her than that," said he.

So Harry and Kate went down to the old woman's cabin that afternoon, after school, and asked her.

Aunt Matilda didn't hesitate an instant.

"Ef you chill'en is really a-goin' to give me a present, there ain't nothin' I'd rather have than a Chrismis tree."

"A Christmas tree!" cried Harry and Kate, both bursting out laughing.

"Yes, indeed, chill'en. Ef ye give me anything, give me a good big fiery Chrismis tree, like you all had, year 'fore las'."

Two years before, Harry and Kate had had their last Christmas tree. There were no younger children, and these two were now considered to have outgrown that method of celebrating Christmas. But they had missed their tree last year—missed it very much.

And now Aunt Matilda wanted one. It was the very thing!

"Hurrah!" cried Harry; "you shall have it. Hurrah for Aunt Matilda's Christmas tree!"

"Hurrah!" cried Kate; "won't it be splendid? Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" said Uncle Braddock, who was just coming up to the cabin door, but he did not shout very loud, and nobody heard him.

"Hurrah! I wonder what dey's all hurrahin' about?" he said to himself.

Harry and Kate had started off to run home with the news, but Aunt Matilda told the old man all about it, and when he heard there was to be a Christmas tree, he was just as glad as anybody.

When it became generally known that Aunt Matilda was to have a Christmas tree, the people of the neighborhood took a great interest in the matter. John Walker and Dick Ford, two colored men of the vicinity, volunteered to get the tree. But when they went out into the woods to cut it, eighteen other colored people, big and little, followed them, some to help and some to give advice.

A very fine tree was selected. It was a pine, ten feet high, and when they brought it into Aunt Matilda's cabin, they could not stand it upright, for her ceiling was rather low.

When Harry and Kate came home from school they were rather surprised to see so big a tree, but it was such a fine one that they thought they must have it. After some consideration it was determined to erect it in a deserted cabin, near by, which had no upper floor, and was high enough

to allow the tree to stand up satisfactorily. This was, indeed, an excellent arrangement, for it was better to keep the decoration of the Christmas tree a secret from Aunt Matilda until all was completed.

The next day was a holiday, and Harry and Kate went earnestly to work. A hole was dug in the clay floor of the old cabin, and the tree planted firmly therein. It was very firm, indeed, for a little colored boy named Josephine's Bobby climbed nearly to the topmost branch, without shaking it very much. For four or five days the work of decorating the tree went on. Everybody talked about it, a great many laughed at it, and nearly everybody seemed inclined to give something to hang upon its branches. Kate brought a large box containing the decorations of her last Christmas tree, and she and Harry hung sparkling balls, and golden stars, and silver fishes, and red and blue paper angels, and candy swans, and sugar pears, and glittering things of all sorts, shapes, and sizes upon the boughs. Harry had a step-ladder, and Dick Ford and five colored boys held it firmly while he stood on it and tied on the ornaments. Very soon the neighbors began to send in their contributions. Mrs. Loudon gave a stout woolen dress, which was draped over a lower branch; while Mr. Loudon, who was not to be diverted from his original idea, sent an army blanket, which Kate arranged around the root of the tree, so as to look as much as possible like gray moss. Mr. Darby, who kept the store, sent a large paper bag of sugar and a small bag of tea, which were carefully hung on lower branches. Miss Jane Davis thought she ought to do something, and she contributed a peck of sweet potatoes, which, each tied to a string, were soon dangling from the branches. Then Mr. Truly Matthews, who did not wish to be behind his neighbors in generosity, sent a shoulder of bacon, which looked quite magnificent as it hung about the middle of the tree. Other people sent bars of soap, bags of meal, packages of smoking tobacco, and flannel petticoats. A pair of shoes was contributed, and several pairs of stockings, which latter were filled with apples and hickory nuts by the considerate Kate. Several of the school children gave sticks of candy; and old Mrs. Sarah Page, who had nothing else to spare, brought a jug of molasses, which was suspended near the top of the tree. Kate did not fancy the appearance of the jug, and she wreathed it with strings of glittering glass balls; and the shoulder of bacon she stuck full of red berries and holly leaves. Harry contributed a bright red handkerchief for Aunt Matilda's head, and Kate gave a shawl which was yellower than a sunflower, if such a thing could be. And Harry bore the general expenses of the "extras," which were not trifling.

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When Christmas eve arrived everybody came to see Aunt Matilda's Christmas tree. Kate and Harry were inside superintending the final arrangements, and about fifty or sixty persons, colored and white, were gathered around the closed door of the old cabin. When all was ready Aunt Matilda made her appearance, supported on either side by Dick Ford and John Walker, while Uncle Braddock, in his many-colored dressing-gown, followed close behind. Then the door was opened, and Aunt Matilda entered, followed by as many of the crowd as could get in. It was certainly a scene of splendor. A wood fire blazed in the fire-place at one end of the cabin, while dozens of tallow candles lighted up the

(To be continued.)

tree. The gold and silver stars glistened, the many-colored glass balls shone among the green pine boughs; the shoulder of bacon glowed like a bed of flowers, while the jug of molasses hung calm and serene surrounded by its glittering beads. A universal buzz of approbation and delight arose. No one had ever seen such a Christmas tree before. Every bough and every branch bore something useful as well as ornamental.

As for Aunt Matilda, for several moments she remained speechless with delight. At last she exclaimed:

"Laws-a-massey! It's wuth while being good for ninety-five years to git such a tree at las'."

## THE LITTLE GIRL WHO WOULD N'T EAT CRUSTS.



THE awfulest times that ever could be  
They had with a bad little girl of Dundee,  
Who never would finish her crust.  
In vain they besought her,  
And patiently taught her,  
And told her she must.

Her grandma would coax,  
And so would the folks,  
And tell her the sinning  
Of such a beginning.  
But no, she would n't,  
She could n't, she should n't,  
She'd have them to know—  
So they might as well go.

Now what do you think soon came to pass?  
This little girl of Dundee, alas!  
Who would n't take crusts in the regular way,  
Sat down to a feast one summer's day;  
And what did the people that little girl give,  
But a dish of *bread pudding*—as sure as I live!

PETE.

BY L. G. M.

"I'M Pete. An' I'm a newsboy. This story ain't writ by me, coz I can't write. Nor I can't read, so if anything 's took down wrong, it won't be my fault.

"A gentlemun in one of our offices says to me: 'You tell me the story of your young un, an' I'll

take it down, and git it printed in ST. NICHOLAS.' An' he says to begin at the werry beginnin', w'en I fust seed my young un—a little chap wot I foun' arter his father died, an' he had n't nothin' but a fiddle in the world. When I fust goes up to him in the Park, down to City Hall, and asks him to

play, he takes his stick an' pulls it acrost an' acrost the strings, an' makes the wust n'ise ye ever heerd in yer life. He felt so took down when I laughed that I asked him, serious, to keep at it, till he he says, lookin' up inter my face, drefful disappointed, 'They's awful n'ises, ain't they?' I says, 'Wal, no; I've heerd the cats make ten times wuss ones nor that. I guess it 'll come some time if ye keep a tryin',' an' it cheered him heaps.

"So he hugged up his fiddle an' we started down to the corner. An' I says, 'W'ere air ye goin'?' An' he says, 'Now'eres.' An' I says, 'Don't ye live now'eres?' An' he says, 'No.' An' I says they was n't no use in it, fur he could n't no more take keer of hisself than a baby ken, an' he'd have to live with me. An' he says, 'Will *you* take care o' me?' An' I says, 'Yes, I will.' An' that's the way he come to be my young un.

"I axed him wot was his name, an' I can't tell yer it, fur it was one o' them blamed furrin names, an' I could n't never get it right, so I al-lus called him jes 'Young Un.' An' he axed me wot was my name, an' I telled him, 'Pete,' an' then we knowed each other.

"W'ere do ye live, Pete?' he says; an' I sez, 'Wal, I live roun'—jes about roun'—here, I guess. Ye see, I moved this mornin'.' An' he says, 'W'ere did ye move to?' An' that was a stunner. I war n't a newsboy then, ye know; I was on'y a loafer. But I seed a airy; so I says, 'Wal, we'll wait till all the lights is put out down stairs in this house, an' then we'll live here ternaht. But we mus' go fust an' git our bed afore it's dark,' I says. So we walks roun' to a lot w'ere they was buildin', an' he waits wile I digs out the bed from under a pile o' stones. Yer see, I had to bury it in the mornin's fur fear o' rag-pickers, 'cause it was a werry good bed an' comf'table, 'specially in aires. 'Wot was it?' It was a ole piece o' carpet wot I foun' in front uv a house wunst arter some people moved away from it, an' it was ez long ez—ez long ez *you* air, sir, an' longer, too. I takes it under my arm, an' the young un hol's on to my other han' an' we finds the airy agin. But we has to loaf roun' a good wile 'fore the lights is put out. W'en it's all dark we goes down under the steps, an' I rolls up the carpet kind o' loose an' tells him ter crawl inside it. 'Will ther' be room fur the fiddle, too?' he says; 'coz, if ther' won't I don't mind, I ken sleep outside, Pete.' An' he looks so worried that I sings out, 'Of course, ther' will! Do yer think I'd leave the fiddle out ter cotch his death o' cold an' be laid up an' token to the ospital?' An' that makes him laugh, an' then he crawls in fust, an' I crawls in last, an' then, ther we was, all three of us, squeezed up comf'table together.

"This was a long time ago, afore I was a news-boy, w'en I was tryin' to sot up a broom at the crossin's; but brooms was hard to git. We tried all next day beggin', an' on'y got two cents, an' we was so cold an' hungry that I says to young un, 'Let's begin again in the mornin', an' let's have a treat to-night. So we did; an' we had reg'lar good fun goin' to a shop to *buy* our supper, 'stead o' beggin' it. I makes him an' the baker woman laugh axin' her to guv me 'the most she can of anything for two cents.' An', I tell ye wot, she was a jolly woman, too, for she guv us a lot o' bread, an' then she told us to hold on a bit, an' she went into another room an' bringed us out in her apron a lot o' splendid stale goodies an' some elegant bits o' sugar wot was broke off a real weddin' cake. She did somethin' else, too. W'en the young un looked up at her an' says, 'You's good!' an' tuk hold of her gownd, she stooped down suddent, an' *she put her two arms roun' him an' kissed him!* An' he dropped his fiddle—think o' that! He *dropped his fiddle*, wot he never let go of night or day afore. An' he put his arms roun' her neck an' hid his face agin her. An' she says to me, 'Be good to him, for he's littler nor you.' An' he sings out, 'He is good to me! They ain't nobody so good as Pete in the whole world!' Then he cotches hold o' me an' we picks up the fiddle, an' the woman opens the door for us, an' tells us not to forgit weer the shop is, but to come to her w'en we's stuck an' can't git no supper. But I don't know wot made her stan' at the door an' cry whilst she was lookin' arter us. *We* did n't do nothin' to make her cry. An' I don't know wot made the young un cry nuther. An'—bust me! I don't know wot made *me* 'most up an' cry, too. I wonder wot it was?

"But that ain't wot I was goin' to tell yer about Santy Klaus, on'y it was just that time we used to have lots o' fun lookin' in the shop windies seein' the Chrismus trees an' things. An' wot tickled him more nor anything else was the Santy Klauses with the bags o' toys an' things piled on their backs. He axed me wunst 'Did I b'lieve they was *reely* a Santy Klaus?' B'lieve it! Do I ever in my life see one o' them images in the windies now 'thout shakin' my fist at him? The ole cheat! Ye better b'lieve I don't! Wal, the night afore Chrismus we was sleepin' down to B. F. Harriman & Co's in a big packin' box full o' straw, wot they'd left on the pavement, an' he says to me, 'Pete, ain't this the night Santy Klaus comes an' puts things in children's stockin's wot's hung up in the chimbley?' An' I says, 'I've heerd somethin' 'bout it, but I don't much b'lieve it, an' I never tried it.' An' he says, 'Pete, do ye think he'd come to this box ef we hanged up stockin's to the top of it? Will ye let's try, Pete?' An' I says,

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'Weer's the stockin's?' An' that was a stunner. An' he says, 'O, yes; we ain't got none. An' you ain't got no shoes, nuther, Pete. Ain't yer feet cold?' he says. 'Ain't my feet cold?' Did n't I kick a shindy in a place in the gutter weer it was frozed, to let him see if my feet was cold. I got him laughin' so he 'mos' choked hisself. Then he

that creaked kinder in his chist, an' I could beat the chunes real easy, on'y I had to do it soft, for fear wakin' him. An' I kep' a watch on them two shoes, an' I thought of all the things I'd ever wished for in my life, an' I wondered if Ole Santy'd leave on top o' the box wot he could n't git into the shoes. Twicte I heerd a noise an', I thought, sure 'nuff, theer

he was, an' I laid myself down quick, an' commenced a-snorin'. But it was n't him, an' he never come nigh the box; an' I knowed afore mornin' that he'd never come if we'd waited a hundred nights for him, an' that he was a sell! Wunst I thought mebbly it was true wot I'd heerd 'bout his leavin' empty the stockin's of bad children; but he might a left my shoe empty an' I'd b'lieved on him; but if he thought my young un was bad anyways, jes' let him or any one else say a word agin that young un an' I'll—I'll—wal, just you *let 'em try it*—that's all!

"I never thought of his bein' so awful sorry next mornin', or I'd a done *somethin'*—but w'en he waked up an' seen the shoes a-swingin' there with nuthin in 'em, an' I says, a-kickin' up my heels an' laughin': 'It's all a sell, young un!' his face kinder shook itself all over, an', as hard as he tried, he could n't help his eyes a-cryin', an' he says, with the creakin' in his wice: '*Then, we's forgot!*' Then they ain't nobody to look arter us! They would n't be nobody to take keer of me, Pete, if you got lost!' An' then he bust. I tell ye, I never in

all my life had to kick up so many shindies, an' laugh so hard, as I had to that time, to make that young un stop a-bustin'; an' he didn't stop a-shakin' his face an' squeedgin the tears back inter his eyes, not till I thought o' *somethin'*. I jumps up an' says: 'Look 'e here! We didn't do it fair!' 'Do ye s'pose, Pete,' he says, 'it't bein' shoes an' not stockin's'd make a difference?' 'No,' I says, 'but I guess Ole Santy has too much to do to git it all done in one night, an' mebbly, if we hang the shoes out agin to-night, he'll come!' Ye'd ought to seen his face shine up w'en I says that. 'Do ye think so, Pete?' he says; an' I says, square out, 'Yes, I *do!*' an' I never lied sech a lie since I was born. But I did n't keer for anything but to comfort him, an' I made up my mind that I was goin' to have *somethin'* in that ther shoe of his that night, if I had to tell a whopper.

"So I tuk him to a ole musicianger wot lived up



says, 'I tell ye, Pete—let's hang up my shoes—one for you an' one for me—an' let's see if he'll come.' So, I says there was n't no harm in tryin', an' I hung 'em up by the strings fas' to two nails wot stuck out. 'Cause, I thought, if Santy had a *mind* to come, theer they was. An' I stuffed the young un's feet inter my cap an' fixed the straw roun' him an' told him for to go to sleep fast; an' he did, for we'd walked a lot that day, an' his legs was werry small. But I kep' a watch to see if the ole feller'd come or not.

"Nights is awful long w'en ye try to keep awake. But, I was boun' to do it, an' I did till 'mos' mornin', when I knowed it was n't no use. Fust I counted all the lamps I could, then I counted all the windies, an' then I fixed my eye on a big star, an' every time he winked at me I winked back agin' to him. Then I beat chunes on the box to the young un's breathin'—for they was *somethin'*



in a attic, an' wot got to teachin' him a little sometimes how to play a chune on the fiddle, an' I left him theer w'ile I went out by myself to look for somethin'. I tell ye, I stud at the crossin's an' watched the people with bundles to see if they'd drop somethin', an' I kep' my eye on people to see if I could n't git a cent somehow. I picked up a ole lady's muff fur her, an' a swell's cane, an' I cotched a dorg between my legs an' held on to him to keep him from skeerin' a little gal, an' I held open a bus door for a woman, an' I ran arter a gent's hat w'en the wind tuk it. An' wunst a lady dropped a ball an' a wistle, an' w'en she didn't know it, an' I picked 'em up, it seemed as if I *could n't* give 'em back. I follered her a good ways, feelin' an' feelin' 'em, an' lookin' an' lookin' at 'em, roun' an' roun', an' thinkin' how tickled the young un'd be with 'em. But I jest happened to think wot if he foun' out that I put 'em in his shoe, an' axed me weer did I git 'em. W'en I thought of that, I walked as fast as I could, an' guv 'em back to the lady. I looked at her *werry* sharp, but she never guv me nothin'. An' nobody never guv me nothin', an' I had to take home the young un's supper, wot I begged at last, an' nothin' else. There he was a-waitin' for me. 'It's mos' night, Pete,' he says, 'an' it'll soon be time to hang up the shoes agin, won't it?' An' he was feelin' so glad that he couldn't stop a-talkin'. 'You's walked a long ways to-day, Pete,' he says; 'have ye had a good time 'thout me?' An' I says I'd had a jolly good time, but it was a lie. An' I had ter lie agin w'en he was n't goin' to eat anythin' till I did, an' I said I'd had my supper.

"Arter supper, I piled him into the box agin an' hung up the shoes. I waited till he was to sleep, an' then I went off agin to hunt. But I watched and watched, an' I waited an' waited, an' I could n't find nothin' at all but a leetle piece of a branch wot was broke off from a Chrismus tree. It warn't no bigger nor my hat, but I tuk it home, an' w'en I got theer an' seen the young un sleepin' soun' an' kinder laughin' in his sleep, as if he seen Ole Santy Klaus with a whole bundle o' toys for him; an' w'en I looked at on'y the leetle green thing in my hand, I come nigh bustin' myself. But he moved, so I jest stuck the branch into his shoe an' crept into the straw alongside o' him.

"I did n't sleep *werry* much, an' I woke up fust in the mornin', an' I waited for him to wake, 'spectin' he'd bust agin w'en he seed his shoe an' nothin' but the green thing in it. But wot do ye think he did? He waked up, an' he seed it, an' —he jumped right up an' sung out, a-shiverin' an' laughin', 'O Pete! Look! It *is* true! They *is* a Santy Klaus! See! He had to go all roun' everywhere, an' w'en he got to you an' me, he

had n't only this left. He put it into my shoe, but he meant it for you too. It's a sign, Pete; it's a *sign*. We *ain't* forgot. They *is* somebody *some-where* to take keer of us!'

"That's wot he b'lieved, an' he allers stuck to it, an' kep' the green thing buttoned up in his jacket. An' he kep' it till we got stuck on account of his bein' took sick, an' went to the baker-woman's, an' she kep' us an' put him into a bed, an' would n't let us go, but she an' me took care of him. An' the musicianer come *werry* often to see him, an' learn him the chunes. An' he makes me sit on the bed aside of him. 'For,' he says, 'I wants you, Pete; an' I wants you to put yer head down here, on the pillow, close to mine.' So I does it an' I hears him say: 'You's *werry* tired, Pete. I guess you's walked a hundred miles for me. An' oh, ain't it good, Pete, to be on a *bed*?—a *real bed*!' An' then he says, *werry* soft, 'Pete! I *feels* somebody a-takin' keer of us! Do you feel 'em?' An' I axes him, 'Is it the woman, young un?'" An' he says, 'No.' An' I axes, 'Is it the musicianer?' An' he says, 'No, Pete. They's *werry* good, but I feels *Somebody else*, too. I don't know who it is, but I thinks I'm finding 'em out, an' I'll know *werry* soon, Pete—*werry* soon, indeed.'

"An' they is one thing wot is queer: he says that so often that I kinder gets to b'lieve somethin' too. I don't know wot it is, 'cept that it *ain't* anything 'bout Santy Klaus; but I believes *somethin'*. An' I's sure of it, one mornin', w'en he's sittin' up in bed, an' the woman's there, an' the musicianer's helpin' him to hold the fiddle, for he's learned a chune at last, an' he wants to play it to me. He plays it *werry* soft, an' feeble, an' shaky, an' he has to stop sometimes to rest, but he plays it an' he won't guv it up till he comes to the end of it. Then he says: 'Pete, that's my chune, an' its name is Home, Sweet Home. I used to think it meant home weer me an' fader an' this fiddle lived, an' here weer the woman lives, but it ain't—it's *some-where* else. An', Pete,' he says, huggin' of his fiddle, 'you must keep my Chrismus tree till—till—'

"You see, sir, the little chap was set on it that he was a-goin'—but he did n't go. A week from that day he took a turn, and mended faster 'n he'd gone down. But he was allus kind o' saint-wise arter that, and kind o' got me to bein' so blamed putikular agin doin' wrong things that—that—well, you see, sir, it's led me inter good, honest, steady bizness, and I don't look upon lyin' same as I used to, no how. As fur the young un hisself, sir, he was coaxed away agin his will an' my own, by the musicianer who's been a-teachin' an' doin' so well by him, that, if you'll believe me, sir, he's soon goin' into a orkistry, my young un is."

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## HOW MEG CHANGED HER MIND.

BY ELIZABETH LAWRENCE.

LITTLE Meg lay on the sofa in her mother's pleasant sitting-room, with a very discontented expression on her plump round face.

Everybody knows that a sprained ankle cannot be cured without perfect rest. Meg had not been allowed to put her foot to the ground for a week. Her father carried her into the sitting-room every

greeted with a burst of tears and sobs, mingled with oft-repeated lamentations of "Oh! how horrid everything is! I want to go to Edith's party! There never was anybody in the world so unfortunate as I am!"

Poor Aunt Mary tried soothing and petting in vain, till at last she said, "Meg, dear, I want to



CHILDREN IN THE LONDON HOSPITAL.

morning, and Mamma read aloud, and played games, and devoted herself to Meg's pleasure; but on this afternoon, Mamma was obliged to go out for an hour or two, and it had just occurred to Meg that she was very tired of lying still, and, moreover, that this was the day her friend, Edith Perkins, was having a party; and she imagined what fun they must be enjoying while she was left at home with Jane, the maid. She had plenty of books to read, and a large family of dolls of all kinds, from wax to paper, besides Snow-ball, the fat white kitten, who was always ready to play, but she was out of humor, and did not wish to amuse herself with any of these things; besides, her ankle ached.

And so it happened that when Aunt Mary arrived to spend the afternoon with her pet, she was

tell you about some little sick children I saw in London. Wouldn't you like to hear? I can't begin till you stop crying."

One of Aunt Mary's London stories was not to be despised, and presently Meg said, in quite an altered tone, "Do tell me, Aunt; I won't cry now."

"Well, then, in the mighty city of London there are many people so dreadfully poor that they suffer from hunger and cold and dirt every day of their lives. Now, this is fearful enough for the strong ones, but fancy what illness must be in a crowded room, on a hard bed, with no clean linen, no cooling things to drink, or nice, nourishing food to give strength; without any doctor, very likely, and, in short, with more misery of every kind than you and I could even imagine.

"Knowing all this, good people have built hospitals, where these unfortunate ones can have everything done for them to soothe their sufferings and help them to get well. Some of these are especially for children, because it is thought they can be better taken care of in an hospital suited exactly to their wants than where there are sick people of all ages. In one that I went to see there were about fifty little patients, divided among four large, airy, cheerful rooms, with pictures on the walls and flowering plants in the windows. Each child had a neat little iron bedstead, with a white counterpane, and across each bed a sort of shelf-table was fixed on which their play-things were arranged. Very queer play-things they were, generally old shabby toys that had been discarded by more fortunate children; but although most of the dolls were more or less forlorn, and the horses didn't look as if they could run very fast, they were evidently highly valued by those little people, some of whom probably had never had a toy of any kind before. In one of the rooms the little patients were too ill to play, but as they lay back on their pillows they gazed fondly at their small possessions; and the dolls who sat on the little tables, with their legs hanging over the edge, vacantly staring at their poor little owners, I dare say did them as much good as some of the doctors' medicines.

"In the other rooms the children were able to have a good deal of fun, if one could judge from the merry laughter one heard at the little jokes that went about from one bed to another, and yet, do you know, Meg, it often was saddest of all to see the children who seemed most comfortable, because one knew that while some of the few who were violently ill might get quite well again with the good care they were having, many of these would never walk or run, or be rosy, healthy boys and girls any more in this world.

"One little boy named Arthur, I was told, was a great favorite with all the rest, and I did not wonder at it when I spoke to him, and heard his sweet voice and saw the bright smile that lit up his pale

little face. He told me with delight that his father and mother and the baby came to see him every Sunday, upon which a little girl in the next bed said sadly, 'I've no mother to come and see me, for she is dead,' but she added, brightening, 'Father comes, though, once a month.'

"I turned away to hide the tears that would get into my eyes. Of course, I knew the kind doctors and nurses at the hospital did all they possibly could for the happiness of the poor little things, but it seemed to me so very, very hard, that they could not have their mothers just when they were ill and needed them so much!

"One thing that brightened all, was their sweet behavior to each other. Not one bit of jealousy or selfishness did I see, and there was a real courtesy in the way that each one seemed to care that the others should be noticed too. I could not help contrasting it with the rude self-seeking of many children I have known, who ought to behave better, not worse, than they.

"And how shall I tell you how patient they were! There was no crying or complaining, though some were suffering dreadful pain; and the only noise I heard was a slight moan wrung from the white lips of a little hero, who had been brought in the day before, dreadfully injured by a fall. There was a kind, strong angel in that hospital, whose sweet presence, though unseen, was felt." "Yes," whispered Aunt Mary, as she bent to kiss Meg's upturned questioning face, "it was the angel of patience, darling, and he will always come to anybody who longs for him, and tries faithfully to keep him when he is here."

The story was finished and Meg lay quite still for some minutes, thinking, with her hand fast clasped in Aunt Mary's. Then she said softly, "I'm very sorry I was so naughty, I don't really think I am more unfortunate than anybody else, and I'll never say so again."

Meg did not forget her promise, and all through the remaining weeks of her confinement to the sofa, the angel of the hospital staid close by her side.

## CHRISTMAS IN SPAIN.

BY JOHN HAY.

THERE is no civilized country on earth in which children are not made happy by the promise of the coming Christmas. But in every country the festival is called by a different name, and its presiding genius is painted with a different costume and manner. You know all about our jolly Dutch Santa

Claus, with his shrewd, twinkling eyes, his frosty beard, his ruddy face and the bag of treasures with which he comes tumbling down the chimney, while his team of reindeer snort and stamp on the icy roof. The English Christmas is equally well-known, and the wonders of the German miracle-tree, the

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first sight of which no child ever forgets. But you are, perhaps, not so familiar with the spirit of the blessed season of advent in Southern Europe, and so I will tell you some of the pleasures and fancies of the Spanish Christmas.

The good cheer which it brings everywhere is especially evident in Spain. They are a frugal people; and many a good Spanish family is supported by less than the waste of a household on Murray Hill. But there is no sparing at Christmas. This is a season as fatal to turkeys as Thanksgiving in New England. The Castilian farmers drive them into Madrid in great droves, which they conduct from door to door, making the dim old streets gay with their scarlet wattles, and noisy with ob-

the men can sing of nothing better than politics. But the part which the children take in the festival bears a curious resemblance to those time-honored ceremonies we all remember. The associations of Christmas in Spain are all of the Gospel. There is no northern St. Nick there to stuff the stockings of good children with rewards of merit. Why, then, on Christmas eve do you see the little shoes exposed by the windows and doors? The wise kings of the East are supposed to be journeying by night to Bethlehem, bearing gifts and homage to the heavenly Child, and out of their abundance, when they pass by the houses where good children sleep, they will drop into their shoes some of the treasures they are bearing to the Baby Prince in Judea. This



streperous gabbling. But the headquarters of the marketing during those days are in the Plaza Mayor, where every variety of fruit and provision is sold. There is nothing more striking than those vast heaps of fresh golden oranges, plucked the day before in the groves of Andalusia; nuts from Granada, and dates from Africa; every flavor and color of tropical fruitage; and in the stalls beneath the gloomy arches, the butchers drive their flourishing trade. All is gay and joyous—chaffering and jesting, greeting of friends and filling of baskets. The sky is wintry but the ground is ruddy and rich with the fruits of summer.

At night the whole city turns out into the streets. The youths and maidens of the poorer class go trooping through the town with tamborines, castanets and guitars, singing and dancing. Everyone has a different song to suit his own state of mind. The women sing of love and religion, and many of

thought is never absent from the rejoicings of Christmas-tide in Spain. Every hour of the time is sacred to Him who came to bring peace and goodwill to the world. The favorite toy of the season is called "The Nativity." It is sometimes very elaborate and costly, representing a landscape under a starry night; the shepherds watching their flocks; the magi coming in with wonder and awe, and the Child in the stable, shedding upon the darkness that living light which was to overspread the world.

Before the holidays are ended the three kings make their appearance again. On the eve of the Epiphany, the porters and water-carriers of Madrid, wherever they can find one young and simple enough to believe it, tell him that those royal and sacred personages are coming to the city that night, and that they must go to the gates to receive them. They make the poor fellow carry a long ladder, which, on arriving at each gate, is mounted by one

of the party, who announces that the visitors are not yet in sight. The ladder is then put again upon the shoulders of the victim, and the sorry joke is repeated as long as he can endure it.

Before leaving Spain I will give you a little story in rhyme, which came to be written in this way: One Christmas time we went to visit a beautiful Moorish ruin, and one of the party, an American boy, who was too lively to be very thoughtful, picked up a curiously carved nail, used for studding a door in old times, and, I regret to say, put it on his head under his hat. He had great trouble in carrying it home, and was very much laughed at in consequence. He wrote these verses as a penance for his fault, and I give them to you to see if you can find the moral of them:

THE CONTRABAND NAIL.

As I walked in pleasant company,  
From the tables of the Moor,  
I spied a large, seductive nail  
That lay on the marble floor.  
A thievish suggestion came to me,—  
Fiends' whispers are so pat—  
The antiquarian flesh was weak—  
I put the nail in my hat.

Through the court I walked with rigid eyes;

The breeze was heavy with dread—

I spoke to the passers like a boor

With sulky, covered head.

The host passed by—the friars scowled,

And fain would have struck me flat;

How could I bow when the host passed by?

I carried a nail in my hat.

It weighed a ton when, at last, I closed

My purgatorial course;

I felt that my head was growing bald

With friction and remorse.

I dropped my nail in the Tagus' stream.

And tried to atone by that,

For the crime I had done, and the woe I had known.

When I carried a nail in my hat.

And I could but think as I homeward rode

Across the moonlit miles,

How we would stare, could we see the care

Beneath our neighbors' tiles;

The stiffened neck, the devious walk,

The dodging, and all that

Grow plain as the sun in a Spanish noon—

When you've carried a nail in your hat.

## ACTING CHARADE.—“SILENT.”

By MARY L. RITTER.

[This charade requires no special costumes, and can be acted well in any drawing-room, without scenery.]

*Dramatis Personæ.*—MR. CORWIN. MR. CARELESS. MARGERY.

(*Servant to Mr. Corwin.*)

### ACT I.—SIGH.

SCENE 1.—*Room in the house of Mr. Corwin. Mr. C. at a table covered with books, law-papers, &c. Valise on the floor. Preparation for a journey.*

*Mr. Corwin (heaving a long sigh).*

Well, well, troubles and pains that can't be cured,

Whether with grace or not must be endured—

I hate most awfully to go away.

And yet, how can I reasonably stay?

The weather's cold, and travel insecure;

But, yet, those evils I could well endure,

Did not these papers so perplex the case.

(*Takes a paper from the table, unfolds, and looks it over with a long sigh.*)

I found them, too, in such a curious place,—

Concealed within the book I got to-day

From Mr. Careless, deftly laid away

Between the outside cover and the back.

These papers we have vainly tried to track,

For want of which a legal war we wage

To prove our title to the heritage

Of certain lands grown valuable of late,  
 For half the town belongs to the estate.  
 If Careless should suspect, he wouldn't dare  
 To come and ask me for them “on the square,”  
 And if I leave them, he will surely plan  
 Some tricky way to get them, if he can;  
 And if I take them, then farewell to rest.  
 Who would believe such things could be a pest?  
 They ought to be of most prodigious size,  
 They are so precious to my doting eyes. *(Sighs.)*  
 There's Margery, my good, hard-working maid,  
 She's kind and faithful. Still, I am afraid  
 Some curious gossip, over toast and tea,  
 And under pledge of strictest secrecy  
 Might worm the matter from her; for her tongue,  
 To tell the truth, is in the middle hung.  
 If I could only tie it I'd be sure;  
 But, nothing else would make the thing secure.  
 She's good as gold. Gold! that's the word for me.  
 Silence is golden; it remains to see  
 Whether with gold I can so lock her lips  
 That not a word from out the portal slips. *(Rings the bell. Enter Margery.)*

Well, Margery, my girl, before I go  
 We'll have a bit of talk. I'm sure you know  
 How much I prize your services. You've been  
 Steady, industrious, respectful, clean,  
 Ready to do even more than I desired.

*Margery.* Wal, sir, to tell the truth, when first I hired  
 To do your work, I thought I moughtn't stay  
 Without no mistress here to pint the way;  
 But you've been just that kind, that I could work  
 And not feel hurried or a mind to shirk;  
 And while you're gone you needn't have no fear  
 But what I'll do the same as when you're here,  
 Although I'll make so bold as just to say,  
 I wish you hadn't got to go away.

*Mr. Corwin.* I thank you, Margery. I'm glad to know  
 You like your home. I hope you'll stay. And so  
 To prove how much I trust you, and how well,  
 I've got a secret for you.

*Margery.* L-a! du tell!

*Mr. Corwin.* Yes; one of great importance. If you say  
 That you will keep it while I am away,  
 I'll tell you now. If it should get about— *(Sighs.)*

*Margery.* I moughtn't keep it, then again, I mought.  
 I always did tell everything I know'd.  
 'Tis like a flower,—the fust you know, it's blowed!

*Mr. Corwin.* Yes, so I thought; let me my plan explain,  
 If you don't speak at all, why then 'tis plain  
 You can't be made to tell, so you may earn  
 Five dollars every day till I return,  
 By never speaking to a single soul.

*Margery.* (In great surprise.) Five dollars every day?

*Mr. Corwin.* Yes; to control

That wagging member that I can't quite trust.

*Margery.* Sir, 'tis a bargain. If I must, I must.

Five dollars and my wages is a heap,

And I won't talk unless it's in my sleep.

'Twill be hard work; but I don't care a straw,

I'll put a sticking-plaster on my jaw.

*Mr. Corwin.* That's right, my girl! you never will regret it,

And for my bargain, I will not forget it.

Now for my wondrous secret: Hid away

In the big book I borrowed yesterday

From Mr. Careless, I, by fate directed,

Found in a place that no one had suspected

Some papers of great value in the case

That Careless has against me. Should he trace

The deeds to me, he'll come here to find out,

And then, I reckon, he'll find *you* about.

Here are the papers; keep them safely hid,

They're worth their weight in gold. Do as I bid—

No matter what they say or what they do,

Don't let them get a syllable from you. (*Exit Mr. Corwin.*)

*Margery.* So that old serpent, Careless, is the man,

I hate him so I'll plague him all I can.

But, law! here I am gabbling away

As if I wasn't paid so much a day.

If Careless comes, won't he be in a tease? (*Trying to sneeze.*)

I wonder if it's talking when you sneeze?

(*Claps her hands over her mouth in horror, and runs off the stage.*)

## ACT II.—LENT.

SCENE I.—Office of Mr. Careless. Mr. C. with a box before him containing old books and papers. Books piled on the floor. Papers thrown about. Mr. C., wearing green spectacles, seated, examining papers.

*Mr. Careless.* Here, let me see now; here, now, let me see,

I know just where those papers ought to be;

But if I've bought this trash of neighbor Jones,—

Just dead, poor fellow, Heaven rest his bones,—

And after all my trouble find too late

No trace of any deeds of the estate

I think I shall go mad. Why was I late?

He strove so vainly to articulate

Just at the last; but I could not make out,

Although I tried, what it was all about. (*Enter servant with letter.*)

*Servant.* A letter, sir.

*Mr. Careless.* A letter? Let me see. (*Opens, and looks at signature.*)

From Mrs. Jones; what can she want with me?

(*Reads.*) “Dear Sir:—You were so kind in my distress,

Buying my husband's books, I can't do less

Than tell you that you've been so fortunate

As now to hold the deeds to that estate.”

(*Zounds! here is luck! I hope she isn't mad.*)



Or parted with the little sense she had.)

(*Reads.*) “My husband hid them, thinking that some day  
Old Mr. Corwin or yourself would pay  
To get them back; but when our funds were low,  
And I entreated him to let you know,  
And give me half the money for a shawl,  
He said he'd found they were no good at all,  
Only as curious things that people buy  
When their great hobby is antiquity;  
That he should tell you of it the next day,  
When, lo! paralysis took him away,  
And I am left my mourning to begin,  
Without a yard of crape to do it in.”

*Mr. Careless.* Well, this is good, when here she gives away

Enough to make her rich for many a day.

But let us see where I shall find the goods;

Don't crow too loud, till you get through the woods.

(*Reads.*) “The volume where the papers lie concealed

Is Locke, and with the key I give 'twill yield

The treasure, which, although now valueless,

I think you will be happy to possess,

And, thanking you for various friendly loans,

Gratefully yours, Matilda Mary Jones.”

Locke! gracious powers! that was the one I lent

To Corwin, of all men! and he has spent

At least one night with it, and has no doubt,

Scrutinized, probed, and found the whole thing out!

Lent! I shall burst with rage. Lent! lost and gone!

And no one here to vent my rage upon.

Corwin, they say, is off on some goose chase;

And no one knows when I shall see his face.

And Margery is dumb; at least I've heard

That for some reason she won't say a word.

I'll go there, anyway, on some pretence,

And end as best I can this great suspense. (*Exit.*)

### ACT III.—SILENT.

SCENE I.—*Mr. Corwin's house. Margery dusting and arranging the room.  
Enter Mr. Careless in out-door dress, with an umbrella.*

*Mr. Careless.* Well, Margery, my girl, how do you do?

(*Margery looks at him, and gives her duster a great shake.*)

*Mr. Careless.* Why, what the mischief 's entered into you?

A devil, mayhap, such as used to be

About the shores of the Galilean Sea.

I'd cast him out by means of a stout stick,

Were I in Corwin's place. Where is he? Sick? (*M. shakes her head.*)

Then gone? (*She nods.*)

Why, zounds, you jade! Stop nodding so,

Or I shall shake your head, myself! But, no!

I'm wrong. I ask your pardon. I am quick,

And apt to be a little choleric.

You say that Mr. Corwin is away? *(She nods.)*  
And do you know how long he's going to stay?

*(Margery takes an empty purse from her pocket, and looks at it.)*

Ah, ho! I see! 'Tis bad about your cold. *(Takes out his purse.)*

I wish you'd please accept this piece of gold,

And get some honey-dew, or coal-tar gum.

It's very nice to take. Now, Margery, come!

Did Corwin speak of papers, deeds, or such? *(She nods.)*

Ah, yes; he did! All right, I thought as much.

Perhaps he left them. Just step in and see.

*(Margery again takes out her purse, and the key of the next room.)*

Yes, yes; I understand, and I agree

To pay you well. And while you're there, just look

And bring me out my Locke. *(Aside)* I'll take the book;

Perhaps it's still within it, and this fool

Will be for once a most convenient tool.

*(Margery puts the key in the door, and looks wistfully at Mr. C's money.)*

Well, I will trust you. Take it now, and go.

*(She goes out and returns with a bundle of brown paper and an old door-lock.)*

*Mr. Careless.* You wretch! you thief! you cheat! Oh, heavens! Oh!

Give me my money, or I'll break your skull.

*(He threatens her with the umbrella. She snatches it away and beats him with it.)*

Oh, what a goose I've been! oh, what a gull!

This is the worst drop in my cup of gall,

I'll hide myself lest it should not be all;

But I would gladly suffer other ways,

If this wretch could be silent all her days.

*(Margery drives him out at the point of the umbrella and dances wildly about the stage.)*

## A NEW REGULATION.

If the police were elephants,

Perhaps we'd have less noise;

'Twould be so easy for them then

To "take up" little boys.

The little truants all about

Would quickly know their rule;

'They'd pack each fellow in their trunks,

And take him back to school.



## A GARRET ADVENTURE.

BY M. M. D.

"SNOW! snow! snow!"

So it did. But Ned Brant need not have been so cross about it. He seemed to think, as he said the words, that of all unfortunate, ill-used fellows he was the most to be pitied; and of all hateful, malignant things, those soft, white, downy specks, flitting past the window, were hatefulest and most malignant.

"Christmas week, too!" said Ned, bitterly.

So it was; and perhaps it ought to have been ashamed of itself; but it didn't seem to be.

At this moment a great clattering was heard at the back door.

"They've come! after all," cried Ned, rushing out of the room and down the stair, all his wretchedness gone in an instant.

His two sisters were at the door before him, and the three opened it together.

"O, O, howdy-do? we were afraid you wouldn't come!" said some voices, and "Hello! where's your scraper?" "Pooh! we weren't going to mind such a little snow as this," cried others, all in a chorus.

Six visitors! Think of that. Two lived next door on one side, two lived next door on the other side, and two lived across the way. The first pair were named Wilbur and Rob; the second pair were Herbert and Dickie; the third pair were Jamie and Tommy. Wilbur had on an overcoat and a muffler, for he had a weak chest. Rob had a tippet tied over his cap, for he was subject to ear-ache. Herbert had a cap and a grey overcoat; Dickie had a cap and no overcoat; Jamie wore a Scotch suit; and Tommy wore a short bob-jacket and long trowsers. I tell you this so that you may know how they appeared. As for their faces, they were so rosy and bright that they all looked alike when the door opened. All the visitors were boys, as any one would have known who heard the tramping as the party went up-stairs.

Yes, up stairs they went, nine of them, talking every step of the way. The home children, Ned, Ruth, and Dot, almost always took any visitor that came, right to their mother's room to introduce them, out of respect to her, or at any rate, to give them the benefit of her hearty "How do you do, my dears?" But this time they went straight past her door, up, up, to the very garret.

"Ned," his mother had said in the morning, "if the children come this afternoon to help you keep the holidays, either play in the yard or up in the

garret, for I shall be quite busy. Have all the fun you can, but be sure not to break anything and not to take cold."

You may wonder why Mrs. Brant did not say: "Be sure not to be naughty." But she would almost as soon have said: "Be sure not to cut off your heads," as to have said *that*. She knew her children too well to think they did not wish to be good. As for telling them "not to take cold," that only meant they must be sure to dress warmly if they played out of doors. The garret was never very chilly, because the heat from the furnace always crept up there whenever it had a chance.

It was a lovely old garret, light, yet mysterious, with plenty of stored-away things in it to make it interesting, and a great cleared space to play in. Just now it was even more delightful than usual, for in one corner of it was a very big heap of "potter-baker's" clay.

"O, what's that?" cried the visitors, the moment they reached the garret door.

"That's potter-baker's clay," said Ruth. "It's splendid for lots of things. Father's going to make some kind of what-you-call-'ems out of it."

Thereupon the six visitors all stood in a row and gazed at the heap. It was grey, dusty and lumpy, and looked something like faded-out garden soil.

"What's he going to make?" said Tommy.

"I don't know, exactly," said Ruth, "it only came yesterday."

"Was it a Christmas present to your papa?" asked little Dickie, innocently.

"I bet it wasn't," replied Ned, with lofty scorn. "He had slippers. What'd your father get?"

"Slippers, too," said Dickie.

"So did my papa," laughed Wilbur.

"I guess all gentlemens gets 'em," said Dickie, thoughtfully, "but I'd rather have 'most anything 'sides them."

Still the children stood staring at the heap of clay.

"Let's sit on it," said Jamie, with great daring.

"I guess it 'll dust off."

A hint was enough. The heap was soon covered with children, and when they jumped up they found that Jamie was right. It "dusted off" admirably.

"Let's make a road," cried one of the others.

"All right!" said Ned, in great glee; but he looked at Ruth, and she answered his look with "yes; we'd best ask Mamma."

Ned was down-stairs in a twinkling. Mrs. Brant was very busily fitting a dress on her mother.

"Don't come in, Ned!" she called, as Ned opened the door. "I'm busy with Grandma; what do you want?"

"Can we play with the clay, mother?"

"O, yes, I suppose so," said the mother, pinning a plait on Grandma's shoulder; "do what you please with it, only don't throw it about and get it into each other's eyes."

"O no, ma'am," answered Ned, as he rushed toward the garret stairs again, quite delighted.

But when he reached the top, he found all the children with tears in their eyes.

They had already forgotten the clay; for Ruth had taken a big onion from a bunch that hung on one of the rafters. Wilbur had cut it in slices, and now every one was holding a piece to see "which could smell the onion longest without crying."

"What a pack of ninnies!" cried Ned, laughing, and all the ninnies laughed with him, except little Dot, who whined a little and wished she hadn't tried it.

"Have you given up the road?" ask Ned, but nobody answered him, for that old garret had so much in it to look at, so many odd nooks and corners, that before the eight pairs of eyes were dry their owners were all scudding and burrowing about like so many rabbits. What a delightful time they had! I cannot begin to tell you all the games they played, and the comical talks they had, nor how they "dressed up" in the old hats and garments they found hanging on the nails, nor how the boys made the girls scream by crying "Here's a rat, kill him! kill him!" and then flinging their victim across the floor in the shape of an old boot or a bit of torn fur. At last Tommy looked out of one of the little square windows, which was half covered with cobwebs. "I say, its snowing harder than ever—there'd have been good skating by to-morrow if it hadn't snowed!"

This seemed to make all the party serious for a moment.

"It isn't so very bad," said Ruth, who always looked on the bright side of things. "There'll be splendid snow-balling."

"Who cares for snow-balling!" cried little Dickie, "skatin's the best."

Everybody laughed at this, for Dickie was only six years old, and couldn't skate a stroke, not even on roller skates.

Suddenly, Wilbur cried "Oh!" and stood motionless, looking steadily at the floor. Rob flew to him like a good brother, as he was, and gave him a poke.

"What on earth's the matter, Wilbur?"

"Nothing. Only I bet we could! Sure as I live we could!"

"Could *what*?" cried Tommy.

"Why, make a skating pond *here*, right here, in this very garret!"

"Yes, you could," sneered Tommy, who, by the way, was the only fellow who had taken off his hat; Ruth had excused them because the garret was not very warm.

"I tell you, I could, man. I say Ned, let's do it! We can have a pond here before night. Your bath-room is right on the next floor, isn't it? Here are pots and pans enough for all of us."

All the eight stared at Wilbur, as if they thought his wits were leaving him, but he added eagerly,

"I tell you, it will be grand. We'll have as big a circle as we can get here in the middle of the garret, and make a bank out of that clay—clay holds water perfectly. Then we'll fill up the circle with water."

Their eyes danced at this, but Tommy chilled their ardor with a sarcastic

"Ho! skate on water! ho!"

"We'll open the scuttle and the windows, and let the pond freeze over-night," said Wilbur.

"Jiminy!" screamed Ned; "so we can! Come on here; we'll have the bank in a jiffy!"

"Hurrah!" cried the rest.

In an instant all hands were at work—all but Ruth, who looked troubled, and begged Dot to "go down and ask Mamma." She should have gone herself, for Dot was only six years old, and a very uncertain young woman at carrying messages.

Soon Dot, clambering down two sets of stairs, rushed into her mother's room with—"Mamma, Ruth wants to know if we can do it?"

"Do what, Dot? (Mother, do look at that child's cheeks—they're just like roses.) Do what, my pet?"

"Why, play bank with the clay," panted Dot.

"O, I suppose I must," laughed the mother. "Tell her yes, Dot." As the little girl ran out of the room and up the stairs, screaming, "Yes, yes, Mamma says you can do it," Mrs. Brant said to Grandma, "I ought to go up, I suppose. But they can't do more than make a mess with it, and they can clear it all up to-morrow."

"You're too easy with those children, Eliza," said Grandma, quietly, adding, as Mrs. Brant hurriedly took up her sewing again, "but they're such dear little things, I don't wonder you like to make 'em happy."

"Good!" cried Ned when Dot's happy message was delivered. "Mother's splendid. I say, we must fill up all these cracks with the clay, boys."

"You're sure Mother said we could, Dot?"

"Course she did," said Dot, decidedly. "She laughed, too."

Poor little Dot had no idea that she had told her mother only half of their plan. Her own head was

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so full of it that she thought everyone else must know all about it, too. As for Ruth, she being three years older, couldn't help being surprised at their mother's consent to such wild fun, but she never dreamed but that her mother *had* consented. It was a time of deep delight to her, for she could work as hard as any of the boys.

In a little while the bank was made. "Many hands make light work." It was a fine affair, well packed and quite regular in shape, for Wilbur had chalked a circle on the floor for them "to work by."

So Ned and Tommy took two pails that were in a corner of the garret, and ran to the bath-

breaks, and beat it solid with the back of the spade.

"Keep on! keep on!" shouted Ned, still leading the way, while the rest followed. "We'll have her full in less than no time."

"Eliza!" said Grandma, "do hear the trampin'. What on earth can those children be doing?"

"O," laughed Mrs. Brant, "they're playing some game or other. Betsey'll look after them. She's busy up-stairs, for I hear the water running."

"It's mighty queer," said Ned, dashing in a painful, as Ruth emptied her crock for the twentieth



room for water. Ruth gave a pitcher to Jamie, a basin to Herbert, a tub to Wilbur, and, seizing a big earthen jar for herself, gave the word for all to follow.

It was hard work, but it passed for play, and they all played with a will. They let the water run from both of the faucets into the bath tub, so that after a while some could fill at the faucets, and some could dip out of the tub.

Up and down, down and up, the laughing children went, panting and puffing, filling and pouring, bucketful, pailful, pitcherful, basinful, crockful, over and over again, till at last the pond began to show in earnest. Wilbur seized an old spade out of a broken cradle, and had as much as he could do to watch the clay bank, and mend

time—"mighty queer how long it takes the thing to fill—but keep on, fellows. Don't stop."

In a few moments the street door opened, and up went Mr. Brant to the sewing-room.

"How dy'e do, how dy'e do?" said he, kissing Mrs. Brant and his mother. "Well, this *is* a busy party—put up your work, my dear, and come up to the library—I've something to tell you and Mother. Ho! ho! here's baby awake. Well, we must take him up, too."

Baby shouted with delight to find himself in Papa's arms. Mrs. Brant put down her work, Grandma took her crochet-basket in her hand, and they all went up to Papa's light, pleasant library on the floor above.

"Well, my dear, what is it? Some good news,

"I'm sure," said Mrs. Brant, as Grandma nestled in her easy chair, and Papa putting baby on the floor with a kiss, proceeded to place a chair for himself between his wife and mother.

"Yes it *is* good news, dear, I'm happy to say," he answered, with a bright smile. "I don't know when I've had anything so pleasant to—Holloa, what the mischief's the matter?"

They started up. Surely enough, something was the matter. It was raining! A shower was coming down on their heads, the ceiling was cracking, the baby screaming. Patter, patter came the water,

Betsy! we must empty this as quickly as possible."

He was at the little window by this time emptying the pail. The children took the hint and opening the other window, went to work as hard as they could, and with beating hearts emptied the pond in a quarter of the time it had taken to fill it. Mrs. Brant, Grandma, and Betsy came up, too, and did wonders with towels, sheets and every thing they could lay their hands on. In her excitement Mrs. Brant came near wiping the floor with the baby.



faster and faster. What *could* it be? Perhaps the house was on fire and the firemen were up-stairs already with their hose! The thought made Grandmother scream as she rushed to the baby's rescue. Mr. Brant dashed up the stairs, almost knocking down Dot and Rob on the way.

"What's going on up here? Quick! where does the water come from?"

No need of asking the question. There were the pond, the startled faces of the children, the pitchers, basins, and pails.

"What in the world!" cried the father, seizing a pail and scooping up as much as he could from the pond. "Here, lend a hand all of you! Call

The worst was soon over, but it seemed the library ceiling couldn't get over it in a hurry. It dripped, and dripped, and broke out in great damp blotches and cracked and whimpered as if it were alive. Fortunately, the book-cases escaped wetting, and the carpet didn't "run," as Grandma said; so it might have been worse.

But those six visitors—who shall describe their emotions! As one of them afterwards said, they were frightened to death and bursting with laughter. They all tried to hide behind each other when Mr. Brant, half angry, half amused, asked them what they would like to do next.

"Go home, sir, I guess," said Tommy.



# IS THE WORLD ROUND?

BY JOHN W. PRESTON.

"MAMMA," said Johnny, one day, as he stood by the sea-side with his mother, and was looking over the broad surface of the ocean, "mamma, do you see that place, away over yonder, where the ocean stops and the sky begins?"

"Yes," replied his mother; "that is called the horizon."

"Well, mamma, why don't the water all run off, in that place, I don't see any land to stop it?"

"Why, Johnny, there is no place there for it to run off. If you were there you would find it quite as flat and level as it is here, and the horizon just as far away as it seems to be now."

"I don't see how that can be, mamma, isn't there any place where the world comes to an end, and everything stops?"

"Take this orange, my son, and tell me where it comes to an end, as you say," said Mrs. Watson, taking a fine specimen of that fruit from her pocket.

Johnny took the orange in his hand, looked it carefully all over, casting his eyes, every now and then, out upon the ocean, and along the horizon, as if in deep thought, which was, indeed, pretty deep thought for a little boy seven years old, and at length, said:

"I remember, mamma, the geography says that the earth is round; but I did not know for certain that the earth means just the land and water that we live on. But is it round like this orange?"

"Yes, my little boy; all this land and water is the earth, and it is round like that orange; and if you were to get into a ship and sail right straight out there, to the east,—about where the sun comes up in the morning,—you would have to go three or four thousand miles on the ocean, just as a fly would crawl on that orange, before you came to land again. All that water would be the Atlantic Ocean, and the land you would come to would be the continent of Europe. And then, if you kept on going directly east,—traveling over Europe and the continent next to it, Asia,—several thousand miles, you would come to another ocean, much larger than the Atlantic, called the Pacific Ocean. After crossing the Pacific, you would come to the western side of the American continent, where Oregon and California are, you know,—where Uncle John went last year; and if you continued on traveling east, you would come, at last, to this very same spot, where we are now standing, only you would come up behind us; and if I were standing here alone, looking for you, I should have my face turned away towards the

woods; for you would have gone all around the earth, just as the fly would have walked all around the orange, and come back to the place he started from. Do you understand that?"

"Oh, yes, mamma, I understand that; but when I got on the other side, I should fall off, I know I should."

"Fall off from *what*?"

"Why, from the earth, mamma," said Johnny.

"You forget that I told you that if you were to go out to the place where the ocean and sky seem to meet, it would seem all level and flat, just as it does here,—the earth under your feet and the sky overhead, and so it would be wherever you went; if you fell off, you would have to fall up into the sky, and that, you know, is impossible."

"Well, but mamma, when I got just half around the earth, wouldn't I be walking with my head down and my feet up, and what could keep me from falling off? I couldn't stick on with my feet, could I?"

"Which way is *up*, Johnny?"

"Why, *up* is right up here, overhead, up in the sky!"

"Well, which way is *down*?"

"Down is right here, under my feet."

"Towards the earth, is it not?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Well, now, suppose you are going around the earth, wherever you go and wherever you are, *up* is overhead, or towards the sky; and down is always under foot, or towards the earth; is not that so?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Now, suppose again, you had got half around the earth, and were in China, and I was standing right here, your feet and my feet would be pointing towards each other, and our heads *away* from each other. Both of our heads would be pointing towards the sky. If you fell, you would fall towards the ground; and if I fell, I should fall towards the ground; so that we neither of us should fall *off*, as you fear. Now, do you understand it?"

Johnny hesitated a little, and then said, very slowly: "I think it must be just as you say, mamma; I understand it a little. I shall understand it better when I get older, I guess."

The truth is, that the little boy was puzzled, as most little boys and girls are on this very subject. He saw that his mother's reasoning was correct, and felt the justness of the conclusion; but could



not at once free his mind from old ideas about *up* and *down*.

"But, mamma," said Johnny, with renewed ani-

mation, and with an air of triumph, "you said the earth was round, just like this orange; now, that *can't* be, because, look at those high hills over there, and then there are great big mountains on the earth, and how can it be round, then?"

"Well, and why can it not be round, even if there are hills and mountains on it?"

"Why, look here, mamma; this orange is round and smooth, and even."

"Is it really *quite* smooth, Johnny?"

"All but these little bits of bumps and pimples on its skin," said Johnny, turning the orange over in his hand.

"Oh, ho! little bits of bumps and pimples, are they, Master Johnny? what should you think, if I were to tell you that those little elevations were really very large and lofty mountains on the surface of the orange?"

"Oh! but mamma, you are funning now," said Johnny, with a little bit of a sneer.

"What mountain do you remember to have seen, my little man?" said his mother.

"Why, didn't we go up Mt. Holyoke, last summer, with papa and Aunt Jane! That is a pretty high mountain, I guess, mamma."

"It seemed so to you, my son, I have no doubt; but compared with other mountains in our own country, it is a very small affair,—quite a baby mountain, though a very beautiful one."

"Oh, yes, mamma, my geography lesson said that the highest mountains are in Asia, and that they are five miles high."

"Yes; nearer five and a-half miles than five miles," said his mother. "The highest peak of the Himalaya Mountains, in the central part of Asia, is more than 29,000 feet high, while little Holyoke is only 1,000 feet high; so that the great Asiatic mountain would be higher than twenty-nine Mount Holyokes piled on the top of each other."

"Whew!" said Johnny. "Well, then, mamma, of course the earth can't be round like this orange, if it has such great big mountains on it?"

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"You remind me, Johnny, of a little Swiss boy, who lived in the valley among the lofty mountains called the Alps, the highest in Europe. He was puzzled, just as you are. He had never seen anything beyond his little valley between the high ridges of the mountain ranges, and he could not conceive how the earth could be round like a ball. I think there was some excuse for a little boy in his situation, much more than if he had traveled many hundred miles over hills and plains, and had seen the broad ocean's expanse; don't you think so, Johnny?"

"I suppose so, mamma," said he, hanging his head, as though he felt that he was the little boy who had traveled and ought to know better. "But I pity the little mountain boy, who never saw the ocean," he added.

Johnny's eyes were fixed upon the distant horizon, where the dark clouds were already gathering and seeming to shut down upon the rolling sea. It would not be wonderful if the little boy were making a tour around the world in his imagination.

"And now," said his mother, "let us see what a little sober arithmetic can do for us. Let us see how the earth can be round as an orange, and yet have the great big mountains that you speak of upon it. Do you know how long an inch is?"

"Twelve inches make one foot," replied Johnny, promptly.

"Yes, but how long is an inch?"

He did not exactly know, but thought they could guess pretty near it.

"Well, we'll try," said his mother, "it is about an inch from the end of my thumb nail to the nearest joint of my thumb, where it bends,—that is near enough for our present purpose. Now let us see how many inches this orange is through, in the widest part. I should say it was about three inches in diameter, what should you say?"

"I guess that is pretty near it."

"That is not *guessing*, Johnny, that is *calculating* or *reckoning*. We will call it three inches, then. Now let us fix our eyes on one of those little bumps or pimples on the orange, and make an estimate of its height. How high should you think it was?"

"Why, mamma, how can I tell that? I should think it would take a hundred of them, piled on top of each other, to make an inch high."

"Well, my little boy, I think you have made a very good *guess* this time; for I am quite sure

you would find, if you tried it, that the height of one of those little pimples would not vary much from a hundredth part of an inch above the level of the orange. Now, suppose, as we have said, that the diameter of the orange is three inches, and the height of the little bump is one hundredth of an inch, then the diameter of the orange is three hundred times the height of the pimple. Is not that so?"

"Of course, mamma, if it takes one hundred of those little bumps to make a bump one inch high, it will take three hundred of them to go through the orange."

"That is exactly the *idea*, Johnny, though I do not think you use the most accurate language in expressing it. And now let us take the case of the mountain and the earth. We will say that the earth is pretty nearly 8,000 miles in diameter, that is, *through* it, and that the mountain in Asia, that we spoke of, is five and a-half miles high. Now, how many times greater is the earth's diameter than the mountain's height?"

"How many, mamma?"

"Well, not to be exact, Johnny, it is more than 1,400 times as large."

"Why, mamma!—would it take more than 1,400 of these big mountains to reach through the earth?"

"It would take the height of more than 1,400 such mountains, all added together, to equal the diameter of the earth."

"And it took only 300 of the little bumps on the orange skin to make the diameter of the orange," said Johnny, after a moment's pause.

"You are correct, my son; and now which is the higher in proportion, the pimple on the orange or the mountain on the earth?"

"Why, the pimple on the orange."

"Yes, almost five times as high; so that if this orange should suddenly become as large as the earth, those little bumps would be as high as five of these Himalaya mountains piled on the top of each other. What a prodigiously high mountain must that little bump be to some speck of a being that may be looking up at its dim and distant summit from the valley at its foot. And now do you see how the earth may be round, like the orange, even if it has high mountains on it?"

"Oh! yes, mamma, I can understand that," he replied, with a sigh of relief, "and now can't we eat the orange?"

[The illustration to this article is taken from Guyot's admirable "Intermediate Geography," published by Scribner, Armstrong & Co., N. Y.]



## THE HIDDEN RILL.

*(Translated from the Spanish.)*

BY WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

ACROSS a pleasant field, a rill unseen  
 Steals from a fountain, nor does aught betray  
 Its presence, save a tint of livelier green,  
 And flowers that scent the air along its way.  
 Thus secretly should charity attend  
 Those who in want's dim chambers pine and grieve;  
 And nought should e'er reveal the aid we lend,  
 Save the glad looks our kindly visits leave.

THE STORY OF THE JOLLY HARPER MAN AND  
HIS GOOD FORTUNE.

BY H. BUTTERWORTH.

"There was a jolly harper man,  
 That harpit aye frae toun tae toun."

—Old Ballad.

MANY, many years ago—as long ago as the days of Fair Rosamond—when Henry Plantagenet and his unruly family governed England, there lived in Scotland, a jolly harper man, who was accounted

the most charming player in all the world. The children followed him in crowds through the streets, nor could they be stopped while he continued playing; even the animals in the woods stood on their haunches to listen, when he wandered harping through the country; and the fair daughters of the nobles immediately fell in love as often as he approached their castles.

All the players and singers in the known world never accomplished anything equal to the music of the jolly harper man.

King Henry had a wonderful horse—a very wonderful horse—named Brownie. He did not quite equal in dexterity and intelligence the high-flying animal of whom you have read in the "Arabian Nights," but he knew a great deal, and was a sort of philosopher among horses—just as Newton was a philosopher among men. King Henry said he would not part with him for a province,—he would rather lose his crown. In this he was wise, for a new crown could have been as easily made as a steupan; but all the world could not produce such another intelligent horse.

King Henry had fine stables built for the animal—a sort of horse palace. They were very strong, and were fastened by locks, and bars and bolts, and



were kept by gay grooms, and guarded day and night by soldiers, who never had been known to falter in their devotion to the interests of the king.

So strongly was the animal guarded, that it came to be a proverb among the English yeomanry, that a person could no more do this or that hard thing, than "they could steal Brownie from the stables of the king."

The king liked the proverb; it was a compliment to his wisdom and sagacity. It made him feel good, —so good, in fact, that it led him one day to quite overshoot the mark in an effort that he made to increase the people's high opinion.

"If any one," said he, after a good dinner,—"if any one were smart enough to get Brownie out of his stables without my knowledge, I would, for his cleverness, forgive him, and give him an estate to return the animal." Then he looked very wise, and felt very comfortable and very secure. "But," he added, "evil overtake the man who gets caught in an attempt to steal my horse. Lucky will it be for him if his eyes ever see the light of the English sun again."

Then the report went abroad that the man who would be so shrewd as to get possession of the king's horse, should have an estate, but that he who failed in the attempt should lose his head.

The English court, at this time, was at Carlisle, near the Scottish border. The jolly harper man lived in the old town of Striveling, since called Stirling, at some distance from the border.

The jolly harper man, like most people of genius, was very poor. He often played in the castles of



"SO THE OLD HERMIT CAME DOWN THE HILL.

the nobles, especially on festive occasions; and as he contrasted the luxurious living of these fat lords with his own poverty, he became suddenly seized with a desire for wealth, and he remembered the proverb, which was old, even then, that "Where there is a will there is a way."

One autumn day, as he was traveling along the borders of Loch Lomond, a famous lake in the middle of Scotland, he remembered that there was a cave overlooking the lake from a thickly wooded hill, in which dwelt a hermit, who often was consulted by people in perplexity, and who bore the name of the Man of Wisdom.

He was not a wicked magician, nor did he pretend to have any dealings with the dead. He was gifted only with what was called clearness of vision; he could see into the secret of things, just as Zerah Colburn could see into difficult problems of mathematics, without study. Things that were darkness to others were as clear as sunlight to him. He lived on roots and herbs, and flourished so wonderfully on the diet, that what he didn't know was considered not worth knowing.

It was near nightfall when the jolly harper man came to the famous hill. The sun was going down in splendor, and the moon was coming up, faint and shadowy, and turning into gold as the shadows deepened. Showers of silver began to fall on Loch Lomond, and to quiver over the valleys. It was an hour to fill a minstrel's heart with romantic feeling, and it lent its witchery to the heart of the jolly harper man.

He wandered up the hill, overlooking the lake,



THE PROPHECY TO SIR ROGER AND SIR CHARLES.



where dwelt the Man of Wisdom, to whose mind all things were clear. He sat down near the mouth of the cave, partook of his evening meal, then, seizing his harp, began to play.

He played a tune of wonderful sweetness and sadness, so soft and airy that the notes seemed to glide down the moonbeams, like the tinkling of fairy bells in the air. The wicked owl pricked up his ears to listen, and was so overcome that he wished he was a more respectable bird. The little animals came out of the bushes, and formed a circle around the jolly harper man, as though enchanted.

The old hermit heard the strain, and came out to listen, and, because he had clearness of vision, he knew that music of such wonderful tenderness could be produced only by one who had great gifts of nature, and who also had some secret longing in his heart.

So he came down the hill to the jolly harper man, walking with his cane, his gray beard falling over his bosom, and his long white hair silvered in the moonlight.

The jolly harper man secretly expected him, or at least he hoped that he would come out. Like the Queen of Sheba, he wished to test the wisdom of this new Solomon, and to enquire of him if there were no way of turning his wonderful musical genius into bags of gold.



THE JOLLY HARPER MAN RIDES FORTH.

"Why do you wander here, my good harper?" asked the hermit, when the last strain melted away in low, airy echoes over the lake. "There are neither lads to dance nor lassies to sing. This hill

is my dominion, and the dominion of a hermit is solitude."

"See you not Loch Lomond silvered in the moon?" said the jolly harper man. "Nature inspired me to touch my harp, and I love to play when the inspiration of nature comes upon me."

The answer pleased the hermit as much as the music.

"But why is your music so sad, my good harper man; what is there that you would have that fortune denies?"

"Alas!" said the jolly harper man, "I am very poor. My harpings all die in the air, and leave me but a scanty purse, poor clothing, and no roof over my head. You are a man of wisdom, to whom all things are clear. Point out to me the way to fortune, my wise hermit. I have a good liberal heart; you could not do a service to a more deservng man."

The old hermit sat down on a stone in silence, resting his chin on his staff. He seemed lost in profound thought. At last he looked up, and said slowly, pausing between each sentence—

"Beyond the border there is a famous country; in that country there is a palace; near the palace there is a stable, and in that stable there is a stately horse. That horse is the pride of the kingdom; the man who would get possession of that horse, without the king's knowledge, might exchange him for a province."

"Wonderful! wonderful! But—"

"Near Striveling town there is a hill; on the hillside is a lot; in the lot is a fine gray mare, and beside the gray mare is a foal."

"Yes, yes! wonderful! but—"

"I must now reveal to you one of the secrets of nature. Separate that mare from the foal, though it be for hundreds of miles, and, as soon as she is free, she will return to her foal again. Nature has taught her how, just as she teaches the birds of passage the way to sunny islands; or the dog to find the lost hunter; or—"

"Yes, yes; all very wonderful, but—"

"In your hand you carry a harp; in the harp lies the power to make merry; a merry king makes a festive board, and festivity produces deep sleep in the morning hours."

The jolly harper man saw it all in a twinkling; the way to fortune lay before him clear as sunlight. Perhaps you, my young reader, do not get the idea so suddenly. If not, I fear you are not gifted like the good hermit, with Clearness of Vision.

The jolly harper man returned to Striveling the next day, after spending the night with the hermit, on the borders of Loch Lomond.

The following night he was summoned to play

before two famous Scottish knights, Sir Charles and Sir Roger. They were very valiant, very rich and, when put into good humor, were very liberal.

The jolly harper man played merrily. The great hall of the castle seemed full of larks, nightingales, elves and fairies.

"Why, man," said Sir Roger to Sir Charles, in a mellow mood, "you and I could no more harp like that than we could gallop out of Carlisle on the horse of the king."

"Let me make a prophecy," said the jolly harper man at this. "I will one day ride *into* Carlisle on the horse of the king, and will exchange the horse for an estate."

"And I will add to the estate five ploughs of land," said Sir Roger; "so you never shall lack for a home in old Scotland."

"And I will add to the five ploughs of land, five thousand pounds," said Sir Charles; "so that you shall never lack for good cheer."

The next morning the jolly harper man was seen riding out of Striveling town on a fine gray mare; but a little colt was heard whinnying alone in the high fenced lot on the side of the hill.

It had been a day of high festival at Carlisle; it was now the cool of the summer eve; the horn of the returning hunter was heard in the forest, and gaily plumed knights and courtiers were seen approaching the illuminated palace, urging their steeds along the banks of the river Eden, that wound through the moonlit landscape like a ribbon of silver.

The feast was at its height. The king's heart was merry. There only needed some novelty, now that the old diversions had come to an end, to complete the delights of the festive hours.

Suddenly sweet sounds, as of a tuning harp, were heard without the palace. Then music of marvelous sweetness seemed to fill the air. The windows and doors of the palace were thrown open. The king himself left the table, and stood listening on the balcony.

A merry tune followed the airy prelude; it made the nerves of the old nobles tingle as though they were young again; and, as for the king, his heart began to dance within him.

"Come in! come in, my harper man," shouted the king, shaking his sides with laughter, and patting a fat noble on the shoulder with delight. "Come in, and let us hear some more of your harping."

The jolly harper man bowed very low. "I shall be glad to serve your grace, but first, give me stabling for my good gray mare."

"Take the animal to my best stables," said the king. "'Tis there I keep my Brownie, the finest horse in all the land."

The jolly harper man, accompanied by a gay groom, then took his horse to the stables, and as soon as he came out of the stable-door, struck up his most lively and bewitching tune.



"COME IN! COME IN, MY HARPER MAN."

The grooms all followed him, and the guards followed the grooms. The servants all came flocking into the hall as the jolly harper man entered, and the king's heart grew so merry, that all who came were made welcome, and given good cheer.

The small hours of night came at last, and the grand people in the hall began to yawn one after another. The jolly harper man now played a very soothing melody. The king began to yawn, opening his mouth each time a little wider than before, and finally he dozed off in his chair, his head tilted back, and his mouth stretched almost from ear to ear. The fat nobles, too, began to snore. First the king snored, and then the nobles, which was a very proper way of doing the thing, the blissful sound passing from nose to nose, and making a circuit of the tables.

The guards, grooms and servants began to feel very comfortable, indeed, and though it was their business to keep awake, their eyelids grew very heavy, and they began to reason that it would be perfectly safe to doze while their masters were sleeping. Who ever knew any mischief to happen when everybody was asleep?

The jolly harper man now played his dreamiest music, and just as the cock crew for the first time in the morning, he had the satisfaction of seeing the last lackey fall asleep. He then blew out the lights, and crept nimbly forth to the stables. He

found the stable door unlocked, and the gray mare kicking impatiently about, and whinnying for her foal.

Now, what do you suppose the jolly harper man did? Guess, if you have Clearness of Vision. He took from his pocket a stout string, and tied the halter of the king's horse, the finest in all the land, to the halter of his own animal, and patting the fine gray mare on her side said: "And now go home to your foal."

The next morning all was consternation in the palace. The king's horse was gone. The king sent for the jolly harper man, and said—

"My horse has escaped out of the stables, the finest animal in all the land!"

"And where is my fine gray mare?" asked the jolly harper man.

"Gone, too," said the king.

"I will tell you what I think," said the jolly harper man, with wonderful confidence. "I think that there has been a rogue in the town."

The king, with equal wisdom, favored the idea, and the jolly harper man made an early escape that morning from the palace.

Then the jolly harper man went as fast as he could to Striveling; of course, he found his fine gray mare in the lot with her foal, and the king's horse tied to her halter; and, of course, he rode the noble animal into Carlisle; and he, presenting himself before the two knights, Sir Roger and Sir Charles, claimed his five ploughs of land and five thousand pounds.

"Go to! go to!" cried Sir Roger, pointing at him in derision; and Sir Charles laughed a mighty

laugh of scorn. "The man does not live who could ride away the king's Brownie! Go to!"

"The king's Brownie stands in your own court!" cried the jolly harper man, and Sir Roger and



"GO TO! GO TO!" SIR ROGER CRIED.

Sir Charles paid their forfeits without another word.

Then the jolly harper man returned the king's horse to the royal owner—and who ever heard of such a thing as a king breaking his promise? Not the jolly harper man, you may be sure.

## IS N'T IT SO?

HARK! hark! O my children, hark!

When the sky has lost its blue  
What do the stars sing, in the dark?

"We must sparkle, sparkle, through."

What do leaves say in the storm,  
Tossed, in whispering heaps, together?

"We can keep the violets warm  
'Till they wake in fairer weather."

What do happy birdies say,  
Flitting through the gloomy wood?

"We must sing the gloom away—  
Sun or shadow, God is good."

## WHAT THE CHRIST-CHILD BROUGHT.

*A Christmas Story.*

BY M. LOCKWOOD.

IF any of you, my little readers, could have peeped, in fairy-tale fashion, into the third floor windows of No. 70 Oppenheimer Strasse, in Berlin, very early on the morning of December 24th, 1870, you would have been astonished at the stir and excitement of the orderly little household. Notwithstanding the bitter cold, the children were dressed and stirring before the sun was fairly risen. Soon, Frau Hoffmann, the gentle housemother, quieting the laughing children, gathered her flock around the breakfast table, and after Fritzel, the youngest, had said grace, the children began to eat, more from a sense of duty than from any desire for breakfast, on this particular morning.

"I have so much on my mind," said twelve-year-old Paul, and with an air of importance, "that I have hardly time to eat. With your permission, good little mother, I will slip a bit in my pocket to satisfy myself in case I feel hungry. Let me see: I have several purchases to make, an engagement to go skating, then the poem I am to recite to papa, and—"

"Gently, my Paul," said the mother. "There is abundance of time for all, and while you are eating—for a good breakfast is needed with such a long day's work before you—I will explain what I would have you do for me."

"Ah," said a fair-haired maiden of fourteen years, the eldest daughter of the house, "how little we thought our Christmas would be so happy, when dear papa went to the war last summer. How thankful we should feel that he is coming home, since so many poor children in Berlin are without any father to-day," and tears of pity came into her innocent blue eyes, as she thought of the thousands of orphans made by the cruel war then raging beyond the Rhine.

"Children," said the mother, "we have, indeed, cause to be thankful, and we ought to show our thankfulness by deeds, not by words only; so I think, if you all agree, we will take a portion of our Christmas money, instead of spending it on our bon-bons and cakes, and buy a little tree, with nuts, and apples, and tapers, for the poor Heyses, in the next street. Paul shall go now for it, and carry it to their mother's, if you consent. Then each of my little girls and Fritzel may choose a child to whom you would like to send something, and Olga and I will carry it, in your names."

"Yes, yes! mother," cried Paul, "and I am all ready to go."

"The Heyses will be so pleased," cried little Olga, and all the children expressed delight at their mother's suggestion, but it was some time before the plan was fully laid out, made, and each one had handed to the mother, out of his or her little store, the money for the purchase of the gifts. In the meantime, Paul darted off for his fur cap and gloves, and after whispering a little plan of his own into his mother's ear, and getting her nod of approval, started on his way to the Jahrmarkt. This Christmas Jahrmarkt was a familiar place to the young Hoffmanns, and would, I am sure, be greatly enjoyed by American children, with holiday money in their pockets. What a splendid place! A great city square, or "markt," as it is called, is filled with streets and streets of temporary booths; here every imaginable Christmas ware is sold, from the small forests of Christmas trees in the corners of the square—great, stately cedars and spruces, as well as the twig boughs fastened to cross bits of wood hardly big enough to bear the weight of half a dozen gilt nuts and apples—down to the glass balls and gay tapers, and funny little "Knecht Ruprechts," made of dried prunes, stuck on cross sticks, in rude representation of a man. One of these is always placed on the Christmas tree—on the gayest as well as on the humblest. There are little shows in some of the booths, where for a few groschen one can see wonderful and delightful things—puppets and dioramas, or even dwarfs and giants.

One can hardly imagine a German child's Christmas complete without this charming Jahrmarkt. It is like fairy-land for two weeks, in the brown old square, so dull for the rest of the year, so bewildering now with its lines of glittering booths, tempting in their display of treasures, all soon to vanish back to Knecht Ruprecht's kingdom, to be kept safe there for another year.

One might easily mistake those comical, weakened little men, who keep the booths, in their shaggy coats and old fur caps, for servants of the jolly Christmas elf—the Christ-child's messenger; and, as the legends say, dispenser of his bounty. Knecht Ruprecht is none other than our Kriss Kringle or Santa Claus, not much changed for the worst, as he crosses the Western seas, nor much less in favor

with our young folks at home than with the little fair-haired Germans.

Paul knew just where to buy his modest little tree, with its ornaments, and added, with his own money, a generous package of the biggest and sweetest bon-bons he could find in the "markt."

Finally, laden with his bounty, the little messenger of the Christ-child—for such, on these occasions, he had been taught to consider himself—started for the Heyses' humble dwelling, to be gladly welcomed by little ones whom the bountiful Christ-child visited in no other open, visible way.

Meanwhile, at home, the children had retreated into private corners, each busy and mysterious over Christmas preparations. Eight-years-old Olga, behind the big porcelain stove in the dwelling room, was straining her pretty brown eyes over a beautiful smoking cap, which must be finished before dinner, and ready to go on Papa's gift table. These little German maidens are wonderfully skillful with the needle. Carlotta was knitting away in another corner—her tiny fingers plying with astonishing deftness, as the bright needles glittered through the scarlet worsted.

Her present was for Mamma, who must not see it on any account. Even Fritz was desperately busy with something, which nobody in the world must guess anything about, while the mother and Gretchen, the fair-haired speaker at breakfast, had retired into the *salon*, where they were, oh! so busy with a wonderful Christmas tree, which everyone knew was locked up in the silent, dark room, though nobody mentioned the fact, except in whispers.

The father of this happy little band, a professor at the Polytechnic School, had gone with the army in July, on its march to the Rhine. He was a private in the gallant *Königin Elizabeth* Regiment, of the army corps in which he had served out his time in his youth, and in which he had now enlisted. With a heavy heart, but with a brave, cheerful face, the gentle little wife bade him God-speed, while she remained behind with their helpless flock, dependent on her care alone. It was very hard; but she was a true-hearted little patriot, so did not falter, but bore up nobly, even when, with her own fingers, she sewed the little label to the lining of his uniform coat, on which she had carefully written his name and address, so that he might be known in any case of fatal accident.

All through the summer, however, the news was so bright, so glorious, that the loving little household of Fritz Hoffmann forgot the danger, and only exulted that their dear one was destined to share the laurels of the conquering hosts, until the news came of the victory at Sedan, and with it the father's name on the list of wounded. Then followed long days of suspense, and the fear of something

worse, the impossibility of going to him in a hostile country, and the dread of his exposure to greater dangers, and, at last, the intense sense of relief when a letter came from himself, written in the hospital at Versailles, to which he had been removed, telling them that he had obtained a furlough for Christmas, and leave to remain at home until fully restored and capable of taking his place in the ranks again. Hence the joy to-day, and the glad preparations.

At ten o'clock, the mother, having set everything in readiness for the happy evening, even to the trays of supper refreshments in the store-room, and the torch laid ready by the tree to light the tapers withal, came into the dwelling-room cloaked and wrapped in furs. "I must go out for an hour or so, dear children," she said; "be good, and obey sister Gretel, while I am gone."

"Thou goest to bring the dear father,—is it not so, Mütterchen?" And Fritz hung to her skirts, and pulled the tassels of her muff.

Wise little Carlotta, who had jumped up hastily, and held her hands behind her, full of knitting work, tossed back her mass of flaxen hair, and broke in with "*Ach nein*, thou foolish Fritz, the father comes only *after* dinner." Mother kissed the little boy's earnest, dimpled face, and went out, laughing softly to herself in the happiness of her heart, while Olga, who had hardly got through with her work in time, hurried after her, drawing on warm mittens as she went half a flight behind Frau Hoffmann all the way down stairs. They were much alike, this mother and little daughter, and the mother was little and young looking too, seeing that she had the responsibility of so many children on her shoulders; right motherly, though, dear little soul, with a firm way about her, in spite of her lovely brown eyes and gentle looks.

"Bless the dear heaven who is bringing my Fritz back to me!" she thought. "I do wonder if he will think the children much improved!" she mused for, at least, the hundredth time in her fond mother's heart. "Our Gretchen is such a woman, and a real comfort, and Paul has been truly a good boy while the dear father has been away. Then Fritz, and Carlotta and my Olga,"—smiling, and holding out her hand to the little girl, who, laden with a basket, now joined her, and the sweet motherly eyes filled with happy tears as she named over her treasures.

They presently entered a mean-looking door, and went up flight after flight of stairs to the rooms of some of their pensioners. To one poor soldier's family after another the two went like Christmas angels, leaving gifts for the little ones who had no father on earth, this Christmas-day, and comforting more than one mother's heart with reminders of

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the dear Father in heaven, who cares for the widow and orphans, raising up for them friends in the bitter hour of need. The round of visits was completed, and near noon, Olga was despatched home with an important message to old Christel, the cook, and Frau Hoffmann, wrapping her fur cape more closely about her—for the wind was keen and bitter—set off at a quick pace for "Unter den Linden," where she had an errand at a tempting bookseller's shop. Here, carefully, she selected the beautiful book, Rückert's poems, illustrated,—it happened to be a favorite of her own and her husband's,—in which she inscribed, then and there, the beloved name, for fear she would be too much hurried at home to do it properly. Her pleasant task accomplished, she set her face homeward; but a few steps from the book store, was a telegraph office, round which a crowd had collected—so customary an occurrence, however, in these war times, that she did not pause to wonder at it, besides (she thought of this afterwards with a passion of remorse at her selfishness), was not all she cared for in the war on its way to her at this moment? What to her, in comparison, was prince or king, beleaguered city or hostile camp, or even fatherland itself? At this moment a familiar face confronted hers, the owner thereof pushing through the crowd; but it was such a pale, haggard face, with such startled eyes, that the sight of it thrilled her with a vague dread. It was old Herr Scharlach, a friend and colleague of her husband, at the Polytechnic. He saw her; and growing a shade paler, half turned aside, as though he wished to avoid her; but she had noticed something—a white paper—in his hand, partly thrust behind him; and scarce knowing what she expected or thought, she seized his arm with an imploring "What is it, my friend; what have you heard?" All her light-hearted confidence had vanished. A great blank dread stared her in the face. She seemed to read her doom in Herr Scharlach's averted glance, as mechanically she held out her hand for the paper. Then he roused himself. "Only a skirmish, dear madam," he managed to say in a constrained voice.

"Let me see."

She spoke coldly and clearly,—all the feeling gone out of her tones. She took the paper—a bulletin. At one glance she saw it amid an hundred names, the one—the only one for her—"Killed, Private F. Hoffmann, Queen Elizabeth Regiment, — Company." That was all. It happened in a skirmish, near Mont Aaron, against Le Bourget, two days before, when that company had lost heavily. She took it all in somehow; and when she looked up from the paper it was as though she had been reading it for hours, and she seemed to have known it all a hundred years before. It was an old,

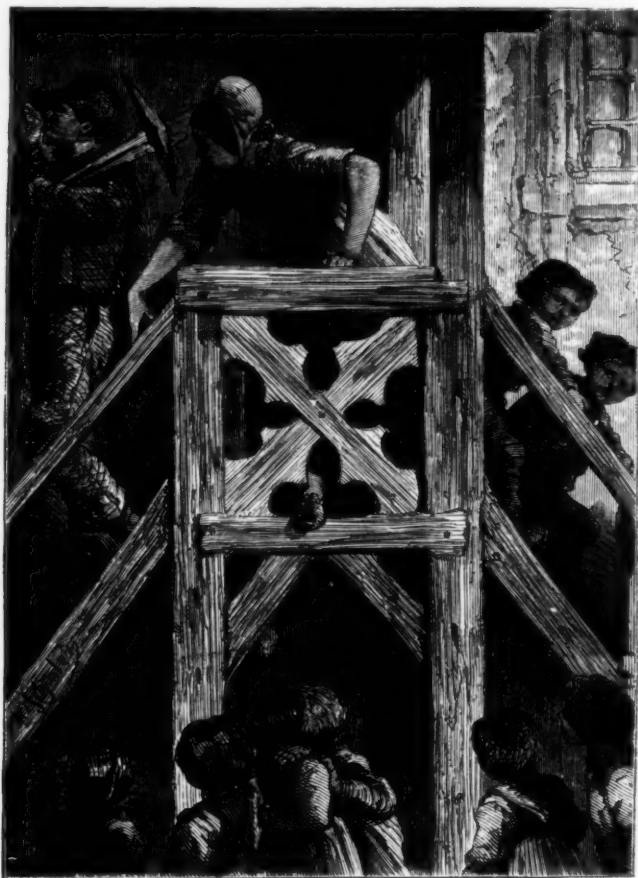
old sorrow, but a sorrow that would always endure, the bitterness of death, which should never be overpast. She raised her pitiful, sad eyes to the good old professor's face, and only said in a dreamy, far-away voice, "Oh, the poor children!" and would have fallen to the ground had not he supported her, while the pitying bystanders, who saw with the keen sight that came of daily sad experience, flocked to her help. A near droschke was summoned, and she was lifted into it and driven to her now stricken home, desolate of its dearest hope. Paul, rosy and merry, muffled against the cold, with his skates slung over his shoulder, fresh from a skating frolic on the pond in the public garden, near by, came bounding up to the door as the horse stopped, and sprang forward to assist his mother and their friend; but when he saw her pale, lifeless face he was terrified, and began to cry, "My dear little mother,—what ails her? Mein Herr, ach, tell me!" he entreated. The poor old professor, trembling and agonized himself, could not answer him. When poor Frau Hoffmann had been carried up the long flight of stairs to her bright little home, which she had left so blithely not three hours before, and laid on the sofa in the dwelling-room, she opened her eyes at last, and they rested on the children, who, pale and weeping, had gathered closely around her. The kind old Herr had told the little orphans, in broken tones, of their bereavement by this time, and they, overwhelmed as they were, still hardly realized their terrible loss; but, so much the more, the stricken condition of the dear mother before them, for whose sake they now strove to be quiet and calm. But she opened her arms and they crowded close to her, their sobs now breaking out as though the little hearts would burst with grief. "Gone, gone, Fritz," was all she said, very low; but Gretchen heard her and nestled closer.

The slow, wretched hours had dragged along towards night,—the eagerly expected, happy night, which had turned to such misery and despair; it was growing dusk. Four little lonely figures were huddled closely together behind the great stove—the friendly German stove, with its red velvet fringed mantle shelf against the gleaming white tiles,—the only prominent white object in the darkening room. The door leading into the mother's room was a little ajar; for Gretchen had just crept in softly to see if the dear, patient little mother was asleep. Fritz was leaning against his brother, who had thrown his arm around the little fellow, and said presently, in a half whisper, "*Won't* Papa come for our Christmas tree *at all*?" with a grieving voice; "will the Christ-child know it, and not come either?" "The Christ-kindlem *will* come, I think!" said Olga; "because he will want to comfort us, and tell us what Papa will do on Christ-

mas in heaven. Papa told me last year that there was Christmas in heaven."

Fritzel and Carlotta, to whom Olga's word was gospel, turned their eyes toward the door of the *salon*, at the opposite end of the room. "Will he come soon Olga?" whispered poor little Carlotta.

through the keyhole; and seeing only blackness, however eagerly the little eyes might peer, they gave up, and stole back disappointed to the stove. "I *know* the dear Christ-child won't forget us," said Olga; "I don't want the gifts; but I do want to know about our Papa, and that would comfort Mother. I learn-



LINA SENDING THE CHILDREN AND WORK-PEOPLE AWAY.

"I am so tired and sorry here, in the dark," with a little sob in her voice, which she tried to suppress for fear the mother would hear it. "Will we see the light when he does come? for if Mamma isn't in the room he might go away, and we not know it."

"O, Carlotta," said Paul, sadly, "how can you care for Christmas trees when dear Papa is gone, and the Mother so ill!"

But little Carlotta and Fritzel, hand in hand, had slipped away from the others, and groped their way up to the closed door for the purpose of peeping

ed a little text last Sunday—"Blessed are ye that mourn, for ye shall be comforted;" and Mamma told me that Jesus said that himself; so I'm sure it's true." Just then, Gretchen came out—"Mamma sends me to tell you all that she wants to hear our Christmas hymn." There was a little settling down and whispering, and a sob from Paul; for this was to have been their greeting to the dear father, who would never come to hear it now. Then, led by Gretchen's sweet, clear voice, the beautiful Christmas music rose and filled the room, filling

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the heart of the poor mother with comfort too, and bringing the first tears of relief to her dry, despairing eyes, as she lay crushed by her sorrow, in the dark room near by.

Thou dear and holy Christ! what bliss  
Thy coming to thy children is;  
For thou can'st make us pure and white,  
God's children, pleasing in His sight.

Oh, bless us! we are young and small;  
Oh, free our hearts from sinful thrall!  
Oh, make our spirits free from sin,—  
Thy fount of heavenly love within.

As the last echoes of the sweet carol died on the ear, a bright ray of light streamed through the keyhole of the *salon* door, and flooded the threshold. Fritz saw it first, and sprang towards the door, clapping his hands. "The Christ-child! he is come! Oh, open! open!" he shouted. Carried away by excitement and the delightful remembrance of last year, when they all waited thus in the dark for the lighting up in the *salon* and the opening of the door, he wholly forgot, for an instant, the sorrowful reality.

But, at that moment, the door flew open. The beautiful, brilliant tree stood in the centre of the great room, towering from polished floor nearly to the frescoed ceiling, and little white tables, laden with treasures, were grouped around it in a semicircle.

A lovely fair-haired image of the Christ-child flashed high above the lights and evergreens with a shining star on his head; and on the threshold stood a very different figure—a tall figure in gray, with a soldier's cap, which opened its arms as little Fritz sprang forward with the cry, "Papa! Papa!"

She never knew how she got there; but almost before Fritz's joyous cry, the mother was out in the dwelling-room in her white wrapper, and safe in his own strong, living arms, close to his warm, true heart.

"My Marga," he had whispered; "my best little wife."

She knew nothing else; desired to comprehend nothing. She had him, and was satisfied.

But the children were not. When the elder ones fully realized that it was indeed himself—his living self, and no other—returned to their midst again, they clamored to know what it all meant, and the little ones, half afraid to approach now, whispered together as if they thought he must be an angel, after all.

Attracted and alarmed by the commotion, old Christel and the maid, Lina, came running in, and

their wondering exclamations, coupled with the children's excitement, made the father realize that something unusual had occurred before his return.

The wife led him to his seat near the fire, and they all crowded about him, talking so fast and eagerly that he finally was obliged to hush them all, and tell Gretchen to be spokeswoman. Then he told his tale:

"I left Versailles five days ago," he told them, "and was not even present at the attack on Le Bourget, which began December 21st, as the telegrams state; but there was another Private Hoffmann in my company—Franz Hoffmann, from Potsdam—which accounts for the mistake, and he must have fallen, poor fellow. I have not seen the list. He had been with us only a few days; and though I knew him but little, he was counted a good comrade and a genial man. I trust he does not leave many to mourn him." And looking around on the little household band he bowed his head in silence for a moment.

"I wanted to surprise you all," he continued, "as I reached the house. I knew your mother's arrangements were to be just like those of last year, from her letters. The doors were open, so I just stole in, and finding everything ready to my hand, was there to receive the Christ-child, little thinking what a strange surprise I would give you; little dreaming that I was to appear as one risen from the dead. I waited while you sung your Christmas hymn, dear children, hardly able to restrain my impatience, wondering all the time why the dear little mother did not steal in to see if the Christ-child had come."

Paul sprang up then with a sudden thought of the neglected Christmas tree: "Oh, the tree! we're all forgetting it, and our splendid tapers are fast burning away." So, followed speedily by all, he ran into the next room, into the midst of the Christmas warmth and beauty.

The children were soon wild with delight over the wonderful gifts on their separate little tables, and Fritz and Carlotta were shouting and clapping their hands under the tall sparkling tree, down from the height of which the fair, waxen face of the Christ-child image seemed to smile on the happy little ones.

Loving little Olga, who fully realized by this time that her papa was not an angel, but living and real, the best gift the dear Christ-child could have brought her, nestled up to his side and pulled him gently by the hand over to his special little table.

Gretchen, the good, careful little maiden, had slipped out during the confusion and brought in the gifts, which, just completed, had not been placed there after the dreadful news came.

All the children crowded up to watch and comment on Papa's pleasure, as he examined his gifts, praising the skill of this and the thoughtfulness of that donor, as he did so.

Just then, there was a violent ring at the entrance bell, and in another second the old professor burst into the room, looking like Knecht Ruprecht himself, in his enormous shaggy overcoat and fur cap, carrying a big basket, and fairly beaming and overflowing with true German glee.

Good news travels fast.

Almost before the family were sure of the fact themselves, the happy tidings seemed to have spread in some mysterious way, and other friends soon filled the room; coming in, they said, for just a look at the dead returned to life again.

The children and work-people of the neighborhood ran up and down the steps, calling out to Lina and asking questions, till she was forced to drive them away.

"The street's fairly alive with our good news," she whispered to Gretchen, as she ran in, panting, to see the beautiful tree and receive her gifts with a pretty show of surprise.

Frau Hoffmann, who had disappeared for a few moments, returned presently in her pretty blue dress, which had been especially prepared for this happy occasion, followed by Christel and Lina with the refreshment trays. Then there was jubilee, indeed.

The Christmas greeting passed around, and the Children's Christmas hymn was called for. What a joyous strain the music took this time! How out of each heart in that now blessed little family rose the song of thanksgiving!

Gretchen and Paul, Olga, Carlotta and Fritz! laid happy little heads on their pillows that memorable night; and, I think, the dear Christ-child sent them beautiful dreams to herald in the holy Christmas-day?

## THE PRINCES IN THE TOWER.

*See Frontispiece.*

By M. M. D.

JUST three hundred and ninety years ago, two noble boys were traveling in state from Ludlow Castle to London. An escort of two thousand horsemen rode with them; and although the boys had just lost their father, King Edward IV, and were dressed in sober black, I have no doubt that hundreds of happy children who saw them pass, looked with delight at the grand cavalcade, and thought it a fine thing to be a prince. Their mother called the boys Edward and Richard; but Edward being the eldest,—though only thirteen years of age,—was His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, rightful heir to the English throne; and Richard, his brother, a boy of eleven, was known as the Duke of York.

Yes, many a boy and girl looked almost with envy that day upon the two royal children, and wondered how it felt to be the son of a king and lord of a nation.

But the men and women who looked on thought of something very different. They shook their heads and whispered their misgivings to each other.

It was dreadful, they said; such brave, beautiful, noble lads, too; and their father hardly cold in his grave—poor, dear things! But then they would be in the power of their uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the wickedest, cruelest and most powerful nobleman in all England. But for these boys, in all their pride of youth, my lord of Gloucester might be king of England.

Ah, who could say what might happen!

English history tells us what happened: how the wicked Duke of Gloucester pretended at first to be all loyalty and kindness; how he wrote a letter of condolence to the queen mother, and set off from Scotland, where he was commanding an army, to be present, he said, at his dear nephew's coronation; and how, with fair words and treachery, he first placed the Prince in the Tower of London, where "he would be safer than anywhere else, until the grand ceremony should take place;" how he afterwards took the little Duke of York from his sobbing mother and put him, too, in the dreary Tower; and how —.

But you see them in the picture. They are together; that is some comfort. Their chamber is grandly furnished, but it is in a prison. Not the Prince of Wales, nor the Duke of York, now, but two heart-sick, terrified boys, who every moment dread—they hardly know what. If they only could feel their mother's arm about them once again! They have prayed and prayed, and they have cried till they can cry no more, and, with breaking hearts, they have straightened themselves proudly with the thought that they are the sons of a king, when suddenly they hear a footstep outside.

To this day, visitors at the Tower are shown the very spot at the foot of the gloomy stone stairs where the bodies of the murdered Princes were buried.

Delaroche, a Frenchman, painted the large picture from which our engraving is made. He had the story of the princes in his heart; and though he may or may not have loved England, he certainly loved these two English boys; else how could he have so painted them, that stout men feel like sobbing when they look at the wonderful picture? It hangs, to-day, in the gallery of the Luxembourg, in Paris; and every day children stand before it, feeling not at all as the children did who saw the princes ride by in state, nearly four hundred years ago.

I have not told you all about Edward and Richard, after all. Those of you who know what happened will hardly wish to hear the sad story again, and those who do not, may read it whenever they will; for it stands recorded on earth and in heaven.

And the history of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, also stands recorded.

Here is the end of it:

There had been a terrible battle, at the close of which a crown was picked up, all bruised and trampled and stained with blood, and put upon Henry of Richmond's head, amid loud and rejoicing cries of "Long live King Henry!"

"That night, a horse was led up to the church of the Grey Friars, at Leicester, across whose back was tied, like some worthless sack, a naked body, brought there for burial. It was the body of the last of the Plantagenet line, King Richard the Third, usurper and murderer, slain at the battle of Bosworth Field, in the thirty-second year of his age, after a miserable reign of two years."

## THE BOY WHO WORKED.

BY ROSWELL-SMITH.



"DON'T YOU WANT A RIDE?"

It was a beautiful day in the early Spring of 18—. I lived at the West then, in one of those half rural cities for which the West is so famed. I had started out for a drive.

The air was balmy as June. The mud in the streets had dried up, the birds were going mad

with joy,—the hum of bees, and the fragrance of blossoms mingled with the song of the birds.

Soon I was gaily speeding along the graveled road; down through Dublin, as we called the poorer quarter of the town (though the real Dublin is a handsome and well-built city), out into the



country. The horses seemed to share my pleasure and enthusiasm in the drive, as I have no doubt they did. Their sleek, glossy coats glistened in the sunshine, and they arched their necks, and moved proudly, knowing well the hand that held the reins, and loving the tones of the voice behind them.

The odors of the great Dublin Pork Packing Establishment were wafted to us, as we dashed past its great dark walls and noisome vaults; past the squalid cabins of squatters; past the great distilleries, with their tall chimnies, belching clouds of smoke that seemed to come from subterranean fires; past great rumbling country wagons, with half-drunken drivers, going home from the distilleries with the money from the sale of their loads of corn, except what they had spent for groceries and calico, or drunk up in whiskey; past slowly plodding farm teams, with sober farmers in grey—and women (seated in straight-backed kitchen chairs in the old farm wagons), in costumes of all shades and colors, with calico sun-bonnets hiding faces old and peaceful, or young and giddy, alike; past rattling and noisy vehicles of all sorts, out into the soft and sponge-like roads, bordered by the green fields, and the whispering trees of the country, where rattle and sound ceased.

Just ahead of me I saw walking on the road a very small boy. He was dressed in plain clothes, known as Kentucky Jean. On his head he wore, even thus early in the Spring, a plain straw hat; over his shoulder he carried a bundle, tied up in a red silk handkerchief, and slung upon a stick. In his hand he held his great heavy shoes, whilst he tugged on manfully and wearily, sore of foot, and sore of heart, I had no doubt.

I drove quickly past, and then stopped and looked back, and waited until the little fellow came up.

"Halloa," I said, "don't you want a ride?"

"To be sure I do," said he.

"Then, why didn't you ask me," said I.

"Because," said he, "I had asked so many times, and been refused so often, that I had got discouraged, and I didn't think *you* would let me," with some emphasis on the "you."

"Well," I said, "get in." He stood looking hopelessly up into the cushioned and carpeted buggy, and down at his bundle and his stick, and his heavy soiled shoes.

"I am afraid I aint very clean," he said, at last.

"Oh! never mind," I said. "Get in; this vehicle was made for use."

"I'd better leave my stick," he said.

"Oh, no!" I answered. "You may want it again."

And so he climbed in, and the bundle was stowed

away under the seat, and the stick put down between us.

"I never rode in such a nice carriage before, and I don't think I ever saw such horses," he went on, and his eyes fairly sparkled.

"Do you want to drive?"

"May I?"

"Yes, if you know how." And so I gave him the reins, and we were friends at once.

"Who did you ask to let you ride?" I asked.

"Oh! all those men in the great farm wagons."

"And what did they say?"

"If they had a load they said they couldn't, and if they had no load, they only smacked their great whips, and rattled by the faster, or yelled at me to get out of the road."

"And you didn't ask me. Did you think because I had nice horses, and a fine carriage, and wore good clothes, and looked like a gentleman, that therefore I wasn't one?" I said laughingly.

"Well—yes—I'm afraid I did; but," he continued, looking me square in the face, "do gentlemen always let boys ride, when they want to?"

It was my turn to be a little bit puzzled; and I said, "I don't think they do; but a gentleman is one who always does all he can to help others and to make them happy."

"Well," said he, "I think you are a gentleman, at any rate."

And so I said, "Will you tell me who you are, for I think you are a gentleman also?" and, yet, he hadn't said "thank you," in words once, all this time.

Then he told me his story. His mother lived in a log cabin, in a little clearing in the woods, in Boone county. His father was dead. They were very poor. He had worked for a good Quaker farmer the summer before, who was very kind to his boys, and he was going to work for him again. He had walked more than twenty miles that day, and had five miles further to go. His feet had become very sore, and so he had taken off his shoes and stockings, putting his stockings in the bundle, and carrying the shoes in his hand.

"With all these things to carry, what do you carry a stick for?" I asked.

"Why, so that I can carry the bundle over my shoulder," he answered.

"Is the bundle heavy?"

"It didn't seem heavy when I started," he replied; "but it does now."

"Where did you get the stick?"

"A man cut it for me in the woods, and told me it was just what I needed to help to carry the bundle."

"Well, which is the heavier,—the bundle or the stick?"

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"I never thought of that. I believe the stick is—I know it is," he said at last.

"Well, now, that was a mistake. You took a heavy yoke when you might have had a light one—didn't you? I haven't a doubt but that man laughed to see that you were so simple."

"He did laugh," said the little fellow; and his eyes fairly flashed, and his face flushed with anger as he spoke: "that was real mean—don't you think so?"

"Yes, I do; and I don't think that man was a gentleman; and he pretended all the time to be doing you a kindness."

"Don't you ever impose on a fellow that's smaller than you are, in that way," I said.

"I don't mean to," said he.

"But you haven't told me your name yet."

"My name is Richard—they call me Dick for short; but I never could find out why. I don't like nicknames. Do you?"

"No, I don't. Almost everybody has a nickname, however; but why Richard is called Dick, is one of those things one can never find out."

"Mr. Hollyhead, the farmer I am going to work for, always calls me Richard. He's a real good man, only I don't get used to the thees and thous yet."

"Got any girls?" I asked.

He looked at me a moment, to see if I was making fun, but I kept a sober face, and thus reassured, he said, "I guess he has. He has got one."

"Guess!" I said, "don't you know?"

"Well, I think I ought to. She's just as pretty as she can be; and I like her first rate, 'cause she calls me Richard, too, and that makes me feel like a man."

"Do you live far from the railroad?" I asked.

"Close by," he answered.

"Why didn't you come on the cars, then?"

He hesitated a little, then said, "'Cause 't wouldn't pay."

"What do you mean by that?" I asked. "May be you didn't have the money."

"Yes, I did. Mother gave me the money, and she said may be I could come at half-price, as I did last year; but, you see, I don't begin work until to-morrow, and I wanted to see the country and—and—well, I just thought I'd walk. Mother put me up a nice *snack*, and so I laid the money in the leaves of the big Bible, right at the thirty-seventh Psalm, that mother made me promise to read next Sunday—for I knew she would read it at the same time—with a little note pinned to it saying I would walk. But I didn't know it was so awful muddy all through the woods, or I don't believe I should have done it; but I'm glad I did; for, if I hadn't, I shouldn't have met you; and I might never have known a real gentleman in all my life."

"But," I said, "isn't the man you work for a gentleman?"

"Well, yes. I suppose he is; but he isn't like you."

"No," I said; "there are a great many real gentlemen and ladies in the world. I think this Quaker farmer is a gentleman, and that your mother is a lady. It is said, 'fine feathers make fine birds,' but fuss and feathers, fine manners and fine clothes, and fine horses and carriages, and houses and farms don't make gentlemen and ladies. Only God can make a gentleman."

"Did you ever read the story of Jacob?" I asked.

No, he hadn't; but he knew about Joseph.

And so I made him promise to read about Jacob, who went out from his father's house with only a stick and a bundle, or wallet—much as he had done—and slept with a stone for a pillow; and I asked him to be sure and find out what Jacob saw there that night as he lay out under the stars, and what wages Laban paid to Jacob when he hired out to him, which I knew would be a little difficult, as Laban changed his wages ten times. Then I asked what wages he had.

He said \$9 a month, which I thought was very good pay for a small boy.

And so we rode on together, talking about the wages the devil pays to those who work for him, and the yoke Christ gives us to bear, until we came to the farm-yard gate, where I turned in. He dismounted with his stick, and bundle and shoes. I lingered a moment longer, and he bade me good-by, and tramped briskly down the road.

One evening, in the December following—it was almost Christmas time—I sat by a glowing wood fire in my parlor; it was raining and freezing without. I drew nearer to the embers as the door was opened, and a great blast of cold air came rushing in, without so much as saying, "By your leave;" and with it came my friend Richard.

He had grown a great deal. He was neatly dressed, and was so glad to see me, and I was so glad to see him, that all embarrassment was taken away at once.

I introduced him to my wife and my boys, and together we recalled the story of the drive; but it was evident Richard had come with a purpose. There was something in his manner which meant business.

And so I said, "Well, Richard, what is it? Have you and the pretty little girl at the farm had a quarrel?"

"Not exactly; but I—I have given her up."

"Ah! how was that?"

"You see, one day she told me she wished I wouldn't speak to her when there were other girls there, unless I had on my best clothes, for I was

such a small boy, and worked for her father, and the girls laughed at her about me; and I said I wouldn't, and I didn't, and I haven't spoken to her since, and I have given up farming too."



"SHE WISHED I WOULD N'T SPEAK TO HER UNLESS I HAD ON MY BEST CLOTHES!"

"Given up farming," I said. "Why, what are you going to do?"

"Well, I'm going to try to be a gentleman," he answered.

"Can't a farmer be a gentleman?" I said, thinking what foolishness I must have put into the boy's head, by my talk during that ride.

"Yes, I s'pose he can; but you said there were different sorts of gentlemen, and you see I want to try and be another kind. When you told me what a gentleman was, I thought I'd like to be one; but I didn't find it as easy as I expected. Then I remembered you said only God could make a gentleman. I didn't know exactly what you meant, but after I had got almost discouraged trying, it came to me to ask God's help, and so I am trying harder than ever."

"Well, what sort of a gentleman are you going to be?" I asked.

"That's it," he said. "You see, I'm so little, I thought may be I could do more to help others, and take care of mother, if I tried something else besides farm work."

"Had any supper?" I said.

"Guess I have," he answered, proudly. "I'm stopping at a hotel."

"Think it will pay?" said I, smiling.

"Well, you see Mr. Hollyhead brought me in, and he is coming in again to-morrow. The hotel is filled with teamsters and teams, so I asked the landlord if I might stay if I would help take care of the horses, and he said 'he'd put me

through,' and he did; and that's the reason it's so late, for I have only just got through, and had my supper."

"You want I should help you, do you?"

"No; I don't want any help. I only want advice."

And so we talked it all over. He hadn't been to school much, and he needed more education, and yet he wanted to help support his mother, and finally we decided that he should go in the morning to the office of *The Daily Blunderbuss*, and see if he could get employment there, and learn type-setting. I told him he might refer to me.

The result was, Richard got a place in the printing office, and I used to see him occasionally at work, with his sleeves rolled up, his face and hands smeared with ink; but at night, and on Sundays, he was neatly dressed, and he and my boys became great friends.

At the end of the year I took him into my office, for I suspected the printing office was hardly the best place for him, and he proved faithful in all his ways.

My boys were studying history at that time, and they gave him a nickname, which I don't think he at all objected to—it was "Richard, Cœur de Lion."

After he had been with me nearly a year, I one day asked him suddenly, "what sort of a gentleman he meant to be?"

"That's it," said he. "I haven't got education enough, and I want to go to school, and work half the time."

So I got him a situation as book-keeper in a bank, and he worked, and went to night-school, and finally fitted himself for college. It was a long and hard struggle, but a few years since he graduated with honors at the Michigan State University, and went to Chicago, where he soon obtained a position on one of the daily papers of that city, and got a home for himself and for his mother.

When the great fire came, his business was swept away, but the cottage where his mother lived, "on the west side," was mercifully spared. In the meantime I had moved to the East, and had lost sight of Richard, except as I occasionally heard from him by letter, or heard of him from others.

Fortunately, his capital was in his brains, and a great conflagration could not destroy that; and he was soon at work again.

A few months since, I received a letter, quaint and curious, in a lady's handwriting, which commenced, "*Respected Friend*." It was full of thees and thous, and it said, "Richard" (no other name), "who was formerly in thy employment, has applied to me for a situation as son-in-law. He refers to

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\* We sh of this sto

thee. Thou knowest there be adventurers abroad. I am a lone widow, to whom God has given one only daughter. What cans't thou say of Richard?"

I wrote, "I have no doubt he will fill admirably any position he is willing to accept. He is a gentleman, in the best sense of the word, and any lady in the land may be proud to become his wife."

Soon after, Richard was married; and now it is the Christmas time again. I have just received a letter from him, in which he says, "We have returned from our wedding tour. My wife is a *real lady*, if there ever was one, I am sure. I have got used to the thees and thous, and learned to love to be called simply, Richard, better than ever.

"We found a double surprise awaiting us. First, an invitation to me to take the position of editor-in-chief of the *Daily Chicagonian*, one of our largest papers here, which I have accepted.

"It had been agreed that we were to come back to mother-in-law's, to spend a few days, before going to my own home. When we reached the house, we found my mother there, and everything

arranged to make it a permanent home for us all.

"Mother-in-law said she could not live in the house alone.

"After dinner was over, Esther and I explored the house, and Esther showed me its treasures of closets, and spotless linen and all that; then we spent a pleasant social evening together, and gathered in the back parlor for prayers.

"On the table lay mother's big old well-worn Bible. I opened to the xxxvii Psalm, and there was the money, pinned to the note in my boyish handwriting, just as I had left it twenty years before. It seems mother could never, in her darkest hour, make up her mind to use that money. I tried to read, but my voice faltered, and then it broke down entirely. Mother and Esther knew what it meant; then mother told Mrs. Gwynne the story of the walk and the drive, and we all wished that you were here to share our happiness."

Thus it was that the boy who worked came to be a real *gentle-man* at last.

## LA BOULE DE NEIGE DE JEAN MARTIN.\*

PAR PAUL FORT.

IL y a des gens qui croient que le premier venu peut faire une bonne boule de neige, comme il y en a d'autres qui se figurent que c'est chose aisée de bien jouer du violon.

L'une de ces opinions est aussi fausse que l'autre.

Pour faire une vraie bonne boule de neige il faut avoir une pratique spéciale. En premier lieu on doit savoir choisir de la neige qui ne soit ni trop humide ni trop sèche. Ensuite il est nécessaire de savoir s'y prendre pour faire la boule solide et bien proportionnée et la rendre ferme et dure en la pressant sans trop de force entre les genoux. En un mot, la manière de faire une boule de neige est une science.

Jean Martin était un maître dans cette science. C'était un garçon qui aimait toujours à se perfectionner dans tout ce qui n'était pas de son état. La manière de faire une boule de neige n'était pas de son état, car Jean était un apprenti-cordonnier.

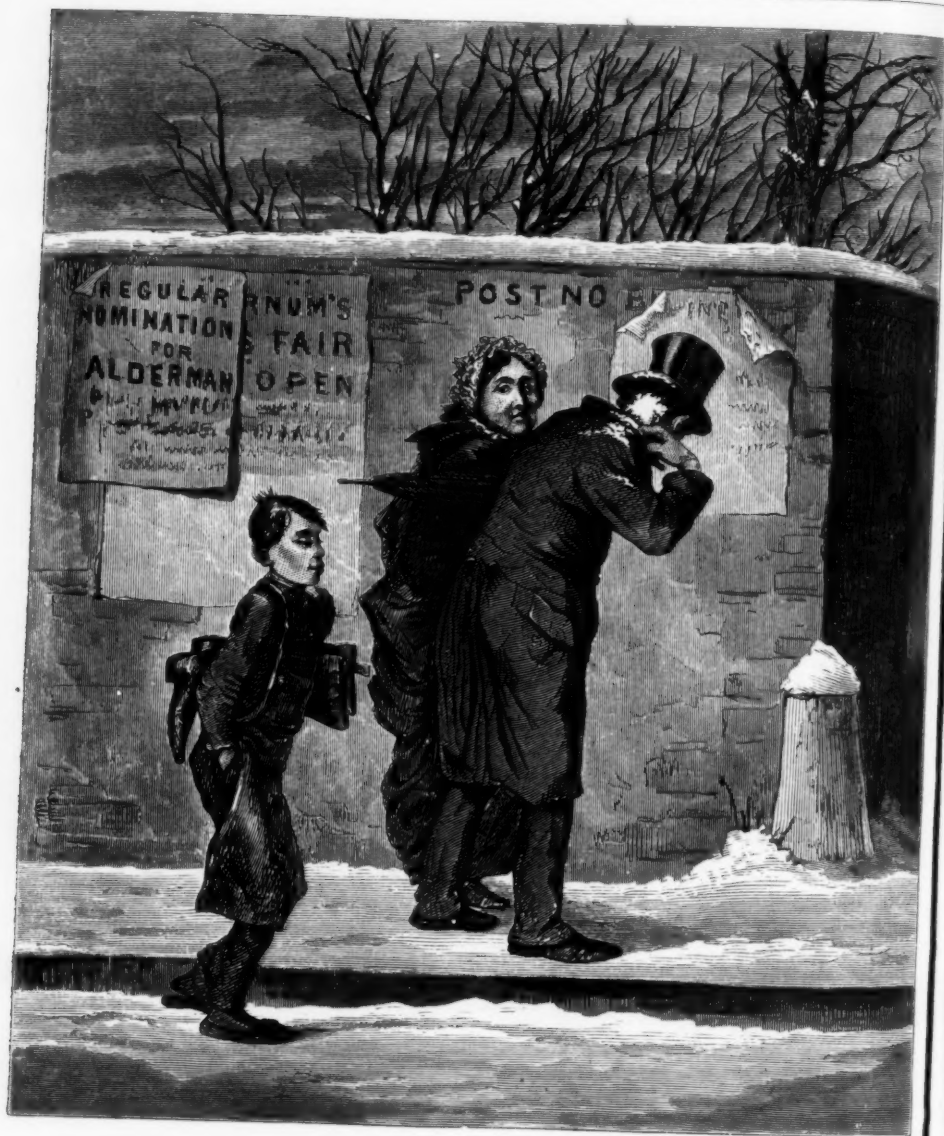
Au commencement de l'hiver de 1872 le sol fut couvert d'une magnifique couche de neige. La neige n'était ni trop humide ni trop sèche. Jean descendit dans la rue pour passer un bon quart d'heure à faire des boules de neige. Il prit une

certaine quantité de neige, la pressa d'abord entre ses deux mains, puis entre ses genoux sans trop de force et réussit à en faire une magnifique boule. Il s'agissait maintenant de la jeter à quelque passant et la destinée de la boule serait remplie. L'occasion ne se fit pas longtemps attendre; Jean vit bientôt arriver de son côté le vieux M. Antoine Blanc et sa bonne femme, Mme Blanc. Dès qu'ils eurent passé devant lui, Jean, après avoir bien visé, lança sa boule de neige. Puis il baissa les yeux sur le sol et parut innocent comme un agneau. Le vieux M. Blanc fit un soubresaut.

"Aïe!" cria-t-il. "Qu'est-ce que c'est? J'ai été frappé par une avalanche de neige. Elle est peut-être tombée d'un toit. Ouf! j'en ai dans mon oreille. Ça coule le long de mon cou. Je sens la neige sous mon gilet de flanelle. Oh! comme c'est froid! C'est horrible! Pourquoi suis-je venu dans les rues lorsque la neige tombe ainsi des toits?"

Mais sa bonne femme, Mme Blanc, ne s'était pas laissé tromper. Elle savait que la neige n'était pas tombée du toit. Elle s'était retournée et avait vu Jean jeter la boule de neige. "Hé! méchant garçon!" exclama-t-elle. "Je vous ai vu. Vous avez jeté de la neige à mon bon mari. Je vais le dire au maire, et vous serez mis en prison, jeune vaurien!"

\* We shall be glad to have the boys and girls send translations of this story. Next month we shall have a German story.



"JEAN PARUT INNOCENT COMME UN AGNEAU."

"Oh ! bonne Mme Blanc !" répondit Jean, "est-ce qu'on lance des boules de neige ? Oh ! les mauvais garçons ! J'ai peur que quelqu'un d'entre eux ne m'envoie une de ces terribles boules de neige. Je cours chez moi. Je n'ai pas de gilet de flanelle et si une boule de neige venait à découler le

long de mon dos, je périrais de froid. Je vous remercie, ma bonne dame, de m'avoir averti. Adieu."

Et l'innocent Jean Martin s'éloigna pour faire une autre boule de neige qu'il se disposait à jeter derrière l'oreille au premier vieux Monsieur qui viendrait à passer.

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## FAST FRIENDS.

BY J. T. TROWBRIDGE.

*Author of the "Jack Hazard" Stories.*

## CHAPTER I.

## A YOUNG CONTRIBUTOR.

VERY early one spring morning, not quite thirty years ago, a tall boy, with arms almost too long for his coat-sleeves, sat eating a hasty breakfast in a farm-house of Western New York. His hair was freshly combed, his shirt-collar clean, his fair face smoothly shaved (or perhaps the beard was yet to grow), and he appeared dressed for a journey.

By the table, leaning her elbow upon it, sat a young girl, who did not eat, but watched him wistfully.

"George," said she, with a tremulous smile, "you'll forget me as soon as you are gone."

George looked up, over his plate of fried potatoes, and saw her eyes—a bright blue, and smiling still—grow very misty indeed, and suddenly let fall a shining drop or two, like rain in sunshine. She caught up her apron, dashed away the tears with a laugh (she must either laugh or cry, and laughing was so much more sensible), and said, "I know you will, George!"

"Don't think that, Vinnie?" said George, earnestly. "You are the only person or thing on this old place that I don't wish to forget."

"I am sorry you feel so, George!"

"I can't help it. I've nothing against *them*,—only they don't understand me. Nobody understands me, or knows anything of what I think or feel."

"Don't I—a little?" smiled Vinnie.

"You, more than anybody else. And, Vinnie!" exclaimed George, "I do hate to leave you here!"

He gazed at her, thinking how good, how beautiful she was. On the table there was a candle still burning with a pale flame. Just then a broad-chested, half-dressed farmer came in from another room, yawning, and buttoning his suspenders, saw the candle, and put it out.

"Need n't burn candles by daylight," he said, pinching the wick and then wiping his fingers on his uncombed hair.

George watched the broad back with the suspenders, knit of yellow yarn, crossed over a blue flannel shirt, going out at the back door, and looked grimly sarcastic.

"That's his way; he don't mean anything; he's good-hearted behind it all," Vinnie explained. "Eat a doughnut."

George declined the doughnut, and sat back in

his chair. "I can't help laughing! Nine years I've lived with him,—my uncle, my mother's only brother;—he sees me ready for a journey, my trunk packed; and nobody knows, not even myself, just where I am going, or how I am going to live; and his first words are, 'Need n't burn candles by daylight.' Candles!" repeated George, contemptuously.

The uncle walked a little way from the back door, stopped, hesitated, and then walked back again. A trunk was there, loaded up on an old wheelbarrow.

"Ye might have had the horse and wagon, George, to take your trunk down," he said.

"Uncle Presbit," George answered, with a full heart, "I'm obliged to you; but you did n't say so last night, when I spoke about it."

That was too true. Uncle Presbit gazed rather uneasily at the trunk for a moment, then slowly revolved on his axis, and the yellow X on the blue back moved off again.

"I wish you would take my money!" Vinnie



then said in a low tone of entreaty. "You will need it, I am sure."

"I hope not," replied George. "I've enough to take me to Albany or New York, and keep me there a few days. I shall find something to do. I sha' n't starve. Never fear."

"But promise you'll write to me for my money, if you need it. You know you will be welcome to it,—more than welcome, George!"

At that moment the uncle reappeared at the door. He was a plain, coarse man, with a rather hard but honest face, and he looked not unkindly on George.

"When ye spoke last night," he said, "I hoped ye'd reconsider. 'T ain't too late to change yer mind now, ye know. Had n't ye better stay? Bird in the hand's wuth two in the bush. It's a dreffle onsartin thing, this goin' off to a city where nobody knows ye nor cares for ye, to seek yer fortin."

"It's uncertain, I know," replied George, with a resolute air; "but I've made up my mind."

"Wal! boys know more 'n their elders nowadays." And once more the uncle walked heavily and thoughtfully away, scratching his rough head.

"George," whispered Vinnie, "if you print anything in the city papers, be sure to send me a copy."

"Of course,"—blushing and stammering a little,—"if I do."

She had touched a sensitive chord in the boy's heart, which thrilled with I know not what secret aspirations. For George was a poet,—or dreamed he was. In the heart of that farm-bred, verdant youth lurked a romantic hope, shy as any delicate wild flower shrinking from the glare of day under the shade of some secluded rock. He would hardly have owned, even to himself, that it was there. To be a poet—to write what the world would delight to read—to become famous, like Byron, Burns, or Scott, whom he so passionately admired—O no! he would have declared, he was not so foolish as to indulge that daring thought.

And yet he had tried his powers. He had composed a great many rhymes while following the plough or hoeing his uncle's corn, and had written a few prose sketches. Some of these things had got into print, and given him a good deal of reputation as a "young contributor" to the county newspaper. The editor had more than once called attention to the "new poem by our promising young author, G. G." (for George Greenwood favored the public with his initials only), comparing him with Pope in his early years, or with Chatterton, "the marvelous boy." George was rather ashamed of these compliments, which he greatly feared laid him open to ridicule. He suspected, moreover, perhaps justly, that they were intended as a sort of compensation for his articles; for he got no other pay. Besides, he had a painful consciousness that the "Vanguard of Freedom" was not literature, and that its columns were not the place where laurels were to be won.

His friends and mates, for the most part, took no interest in his verses. Some accused him of "copy-

ing out of Lord Byron." Two or three only—including Vinnie—believed in him. His Uncle Presbit owned that "the boy had a knack at rhymin'," and was rather proud of it;—no one of his blood had ever before written anything which an editor had thought "wuth printin' in a paper." But though he did not object to a little of such nonsense now and then, hard work on the farm was the business of life with him, and he meant it should be so with his nephew, as long as they lived together. And hard enough he made it—hard, dry and prosaic—to George, with his sensitive nature and poetic dreams. And so it happened that George's trunk was out there on the wheelbarrow, packed with all his earthly possessions (including a thick roll of manuscripts), and that he was eating in haste the breakfast which Vinnie had got for him, early that spring morning.

"I was agoin' to say," remarked Uncle Presbit, again coming back to the door, "I don't mind payin' ye wages, if ye stay an' work for me this season."

"Thank you for the offer,—though it comes rather late!" said George, gloomily. "Good by, Aunt Presbit; you're just in time to see me off."

The aunt came in, with pins in her mouth, arranging her dress.

"Goin'? Have ye had a good breakfast?" she said, speaking out of the corner of her mouth that was free from pins.

"Yes, thanks to Vinnie," said George, risen, and ready to start.

"That means, no thanks to me. Wal, George!"—the pins were out of the mouth, which smiled in a large, coarse, good-natured way,— "I mean better by ye'n ye think; the trouble is, ye've got too fine notions for plain folks like us. All is, if ye git into trouble, jest come back here; then mabby ye'll find who yer re'l friends be."

George was touched by this, and there was a tear in his eye as he shook her hand at parting.

"But law!" she added, with broad irony, "if ever ye do come back, I s'pose ye'll be a rich man, and too proud to speak to poor folks! Why don't ye kiss him, Vinnie? Need n't mind me!"

"She is going over to the bridge with me." And George took up the handles of the wheelbarrow on which his trunk was placed.

Uncle Presbit, who had walked to and fro half a dozen times since he last appeared at the door, now came back and spoke what was on his mind.

"George,"—a cough,— "I s'pose,"—another cough,—Uncle Presbit pulled off his old farm hat with one hand, and scratched his head with the other,— "no doubt ye think I might 'a' gin ye some money—"

"Uncle Presbit," said George, putting down the

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wheelbarrow, "if the work I've done for you the past nine years has paid for my board and clothes and schooling,"—his voice trembled a little,—“I'm glad—and I'm satisfied. If you had offered me money, I—I”—chokingly—“should have taken it as a kindness; but I have n't expected it, and I don't know that I have deserved it.”

Uncle Presbit had put his hand into his pocket, but he now took it out again, and appeared greatly relieved.

“Wal! I d' n' know, George! I've meant to do right by ye. An' I wish ye well, I shall allers wish ye well, George. Good by.”

“Good by,” said George. He repressed a bitter sob; and, with his hat pulled over his eyes, taking up the barrow again, he wheeled it away, while Vinnie walked sadly by his side.

## CHAPTER II.

### TAKING THE PACKET BOAT.

NOTWITHSTANDING the distasteful life he had led at his uncle's, George did not leave the old place without some parting sighs. Strangely mingled with his hatred of such disagreeable work as forking manure and picking up stones, and of his uncle's sordid ways, remained a genuine love of nature, and attachment to many a favorite spot. How could he forget the orchard, so pleasant in summer weather; the great woods where he had roamed and dreamed; the swallow-haunted and hay-scented barn; the door-yard, where on Sunday afternoons he had lain upon the grass and gazed up into the sky, with thoughts of time, and space, and God; and all the private paths and nooks which Vinnie and he had known together.

“I take back what I said about wishing to forget everybody and everything but you, Vinnie!” he said, setting down his load at a little distance from the house, and looking back. “Shall I ever see again that old roof—those trees—this road I have traveled so many times with you on our way to school?”

“I hope so, George!” said Vinnie, fervently.

“Where shall I be a year from now?—three—five—ten years?” he continued, as if speaking aloud the thoughts which had been haunting him. “I wonder if this is n't all a dream, Vinnie!”

“I should think the wheelbarrow would seem real enough to you,” she said with a tearful smile, as he took up his load again.

“Yes! and is n't this a rather ridiculous way of leaving home?” George blushed as he thought how it would sound, in the fine Byronic “Farewell” he was composing, or in the biography which might some day be written: “On that occasion he conveyed his own luggage to the boat, using for

the purpose an ancient wheelbarrow belonging to his uncle.” It was long before George got that little streak of romantic vanity rubbed out of him by rude contact with the world.

The road soon brought them to the bridge; and under the bridge flowed (for there was always a sluggish current) the waters of the canal, on which he was to embark. He saw the rising sun under the bridge, as he set down the wheelbarrow by the tow-path, and removed the trunk. Vinnie was to take the “little vehicle” (so it was called in the “Farewell”) back with her, after they had parted.

“I've jumped off from that bridge, on to the boats passing under, more times than I ever shall again, Vinnie!” He remembered the way in which the little sum of money in his pocket had been earned, and wondered how that would read in his biography: “He had diligently picked up a few pennies at odd spells, by gathering in his uncle's orchard such fruits as it chanced to afford, and selling them on the canal-boats, upon which he stepped from a convenient bridge.” Such things would dart through the lad's too active brain even at that moment of parting.

They sat down, she on the trunk and he on the wheelbarrow, and talked a little; though their hearts were so full, neither had much to say. George cast anxious glances up the canal; suddenly he exclaimed, in a quick voice, “There's the packet!” and clasped her hand. It was the boat that was to bear him away. The foremost of the three heavily trotting horses, and the head of the driver riding the last, appeared around the bend; then came the long, curving tow-line, and the trim, narrow prow cutting the water. George, who had many times leaped upon the same boat at that place, with his little basket of apples (it was only upon the line-boats that he stepped from the bridge), sprang up and gave a signal. The driver—who knew him, and remembered many a fine pippin, handed up to him as he rode past, with the request, “Drive slow!”—slackened speed, letting the tow-line dip and trail in the water. The steersman, who also knew George, saw the signal and the trunk, and headed the packet for the tow-path. As it was “laying-up” for him, George hastily bid Vinnie good-bye; then, as the stern swung in and rubbed gratingly against the bank, he caught up his trunk, threw it aboard, and then leaped after it. The stern swung off again, the driver cracked his whip, the dripping line straightened, and a swiftly widening space of dingy water separated George standing in the stern from Vinnie on the shore.

There was something romantic, after all, in his departure, sailing into the sunrise, which dazzled her as she gazed after him under her uplifted arm.

He stood proudly erect, waving his hat towards her; she fluttered her handkerchief; then another bend shut him out from her view.

Poor Vinnie, standing alone on the tow-path, with the empty wheelbarrow, continued to gaze after him long after he was out of sight. A dreadful feeling of loss and desolation came over her,

would seem without him! how could she endure it? But Vinnie was too brave a girl to spend much time in mourning over the separation.

"I must go home and get breakfast for the rest," she suddenly remembered. So, drying her eyes, she took up the wheelbarrow, and trundled it back along the road.



"HE WAVED HIS HAT; SHE FLUTTERED HER HANDKERCHIEF."

and the tears streamed unheeded down her cheeks. For nine years—ever since, his parents having died, he came to live with his uncle—they had been daily companions. She too was an orphan, adopted in childhood by the Presbys, who had no children of their own; and the two had grown up together like brother and sister. How empty life

George felt the separation less; for he had the novelty of the journey and his own fresh hopes to divert and console him. It was early in the month of May; the morning was cool and fine. The sun rose through crimson bars of cloud into a sky of transparent silver. Birds sang sweetly in the budding boughs that overhung the water; the lisp

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of ripples by the rushing prow blended with their songs. The steady, level movement of the boat, bearing him away to new scenes and new fortunes, inspired him with emotions akin to happiness. And he had his poem for a companion. His brain began to beat with rhymes.

"When the beams of morning fell  
On my little vehicle,  
Which by dewy hedge-rows bore  
My light luggage to the shore,  
She, still faithful, by my side,  
Rosy-cheeked, and tender-eyed,—"

But George immediately rejected the epithet "rosy-cheeked," as out of keeping with the pathos of the parting scene and the passionate tone of the "Farewell." Indeed, none of the lines composed that morning were finally retained in that remarkable poem, which was pitched to the deep key of the surging winds in the dark woods, where he had nursed his fate-defying thoughts (after his trunk was packed) the night before.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE "OTHER BOY."

FINDING that the stream of poetry ran shallow, George looked about among the passengers who were beginning to come on deck, and noticed a monstrosously fat man whose bulk nearly filled the companion-way where he stood.

"Half a dozen of us little fellows will have to go forward, to trim the boat, if he stays aft," said a boyish voice at George's side.

The speaker was a lad almost a head shorter than himself, and may be a year or two younger, but with a bright, honest face, which expressed a good deal of quiet self-reliance and firmness of character. George, who had seen little of the world, and who lacked self-reliance, felt drawn at once to the owner of that face.

Perceiving that he wore pretty good clothes, and a coat which was not a bad fit, our young poet—who was troubled with a painful consciousness of having outgrown his own garments—instinctively pulled down his coat-sleeves, which, as has been said, were short.

"He'd better not come up on deck," he replied in the same tone of pleasantry. "He'd go through these thin boards like an elephant!"

The lad—whom we shall call the Other Boy—began to laugh. "Once when I was on the canal, he said, 'I saw just such a fat man on the deck of a line-boat, as it was coming to a bridge. 'Low bridge!' says the steersman. It was a low bridge—very low; and the boat, having no freight, was very high out of the water. The fat man got down

and lay on his back, with his feet towards the bow. But, gracious! he reached almost as far up into the sky when he was lying down as when he stood up. He saw the bridge coming, in a direction that was certain to cut him off about six inches below his waistcoat buttons. I was on the tow-path; and I screamed, 'Mister! mister! you'll get killed!' He knew it, but what could he do? The boat could n't stop, and the bridge would n't go! In a minute he would be crushed like a four-hundred-pound egg."

"What *did* he do?" said George.

"There was only one thing he *could* do; for it was too late to get up and run aft, and he could n't crawl away. He put up his feet! I suppose he thought he was going to stop the boat, or may be push the bridge over. But the bridge pushed him! It was funny to see his eyes stick out, and hear him roar, 'Hold on! wait! stop 'em!'—I suppose he meant the horses,—as he slid along on the deck, and finally rolled off into the water. He went in like a whale,—such a splash! He was so fat he could n't sink; but how he did splutter and blow canal water when he came out!"

The Other Boy had hardly finished his story, when—"Bridge!"—called the man at the helm; and both boys, laughing heartily, got down on the deck, with the other passengers, to pass under.

George's new acquaintance appeared to be familiar with life on the canal, and had several such stories to tell. George in his turn became confidential.

"I used to peddle apples on the 'big ditch,' as we call it," he said, as they sat on some light baggage on the deck, and looked off at the passing scenery. "They were my uncle's apples, and I gave him half I got for them. That made him willing to let me have the fruit, and a half-day to myself now and then. I would drop on to the line-boats from the bridge, and—if the steersman would n't lay up for me—get off at the next bridge, or on another boat. I was a little chap when I began,—very timid,—and it was some time before I completely mastered the art of getting on and off. You see, it don't do to jump down on the side from which the boat is coming, for the bridge might knock you over before you could take care of yourself. So you look for a good place, where there's no freight or passengers, and then run to the other side, and wait till the spot you've picked out comes through, and then drop down, and you're all right."

"Yes, I see," said the Other Boy.

"Once I dropped down in such a hurry that I left my basket of apples on the bridge! I got well laughed at; and, what was worse," said George,

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"when I went back, half an hour later,—for the steersman would n't lay up, since I could n't give him an apple, and I had to jump to the first boat we met,—the pigs had eaten up all my apples, ex-

stomach of a big Dutchman lying on the deck, smoking his pipe. He started up with a grunting 'Hough! hough!'—very much as if it had been a fat hog I had jumped on,—and away went I and



GEORGE'S LITTLE ADVENTURE.

cept a few which I found afloat with the basket in the canal. Another time I put my basket up on a bridge, but could n't get up myself. I thought I could, though, and I hung on, jumping and kicking in the air, while the boat passed from under me, and there I clung, right over the water. The boatmen only laughed at me. There was nobody to pull me up,—yelling did no good,—and I could n't very well hold on till another boat came along, with a good deck for me to fall on."

"What did you 'do'?" asked the Other Boy, highly amused.

"I dropped into the water. Luckily I could swim, and I got out without assistance. The boatmen laughed louder than ever, when they saw me, and that hurt my feelings."

"Just like 'em! they're pretty rough fellows, the most of 'em!" said the Other Boy, with the air of one who knew.

"On one boat," George continued, "I met with a series of accidents. In the first place, getting on, I was a moment late, and, instead of alighting where I expected, I jumped into the

my apples. First I picked myself up, and then proceeded to pick up as many of my apples as had n't rolled overboard. Afterwards I gave all I saved, together with all my money, for a bill that turned out to be counterfeit. Then the steersman carried me off. Then, in getting up on a bridge,—you have to step along on the deck, you know, till you can give a good jump, and you can't see where you step,—I kicked a dinner-bell off into the water. The cook sprang to catch me by the legs, and came very near going overboard after his bell. I was too quick for him; but I was no sooner on the bridge than a shower of turnips followed me. I think the enraged cook, the steersman, and the deck hands, must have thrown away half a barrel of turnips, all on my account. They went under the bridge, and over the bridge, and hit the bridge, but not one hit the mark they were aimed at, if I except a few lively spatters of juice and mashed pulp from one or two that struck the timbers disagreeably near to my head. As soon as I was at a good dodging distance, I yelled to the steersman that he'd better lay up for me next

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time. But I was careful never to get on that boat again."

The Other Boy showed a lively appreciation of these anecdotes. "Are you a pretty good hand at getting into scrapes?" he inquired, with a laugh, looking up into George's face.

"Fair," replied George. "Are you?"

"Terrible!" said the Other Boy. "You never saw such a fellow. If you are like me, we'd better not be together much, or nobody knows what may happen. Two Jonahs in one boat!"

"But do you get out of your scrapes?" asked George.

"O yes! that's the fun of it."

"Then I'll risk you. But how happens it that you know so much about the canal?"

"I was brought up on it," said the Other Boy.

"You mean near it—on its banks?"

"No; on the canal itself,"—with a quiet smile.

"You see, I was a driver once."

George was astonished. "You! I would n't have thought it!"

"It seems odd to me now," said the Other Boy, looking thoughtful for a moment. "I can hardly believe that, only two years ago, I was traveling this very tow-path, one of the roughest little drivers you ever saw!"

"You must have had a streak of luck!" George suggested regarding his new acquaintance with fresh interest.

"I've had some good friends!" said the Other Boy.

"How far are you going?"

"To New York."

George started, and drew still nearer the Other Boy. "To stay?"

"I don't know. I am going on a strange sort of business; I mean to stay till I've finished that."

"I am going to New York," then said George.

"Good!" exclaimed the Other Boy. "Let's go there together."

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE JOURNEY AND AN ADVENTURE.

THAT afternoon they arrived at Syracuse, where they changed boats, taking another packet for Utica. They slept on board that night, in little berths made up against the sides of the narrow cabin, much like the berths in a modern sleeping-car. Changing boats again the next day at Utica, they continued their journey, passing through the Mohawk Valley, and found themselves in Schenectady on the following morning.

This was the end of the packet's route; and here, after breakfast, they took the cars for Troy

and Albany, over one of the oldest railroads in the country. It was a new experience to the two boys, neither of whom had ever ridden in a railroad car before. This, we must remember, was nearly thirty years ago; since which time passenger-boats, once so common on the canal, have disappeared, and become almost forgotten.

At noon they arrived at Albany; and there George wished to spend a couple of days, while the Other Boy, who had seen enough of the city when he was a driver, and whose business seemed urgent, was for taking a steamer down the Hudson that night. Finally George agreed that, if his new friend would stay with him in Albany until the next morning, he would then take the steamer with him, and they would go down the river by daylight.

They saw the city that afternoon,—the Other Boy acting as guide,—slept at a cheap public house, and got up early the next morning in order to take the boat.

There were two lines of New York steamers at that time, "running opposition;" and when the boys reached the wharf they were beset by runners for the rival lines, who caught hold of them, jabbering, and dragging them this way and that, in a manner which quite confused George, until he saw how cool and self-possessed the Other Boy was.

"See here!" cried the latter, sharply, "just keep your hands off! Let go that trunk, I say!" It was George's trunk; his friend had only a valise.

"Now, what will you take us for?"

"Regular fare, dollar and a half," said one; "take ye for a dollar."

"Go on our boat for seventy-five cents!" shouted the other.

"Half a dollar!" roared the first.

"A quarter!" shrieked the second.

"All right," said the Other Boy. "We can't do better than that;—although," he added afterwards, "if we had kept the two fellows bidding against each other a little longer, no doubt one of 'em would have given us something for going in his boat!"

They had got their baggage safely aboard, and were standing near the gangway, amid a group of passengers, when somebody said, "What's the matter with that man?" George turned, and saw a well-dressed person staggering towards them, holding one hand to his head, and reaching out convulsively with the other, on which (he remembered afterwards) glittered a diamond ring.

"Take me!" gasped the man. "I shall fall!"

While George, struck with astonishment, hesi-

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tated a moment, not for want of humanity, but because he lacked decision, the Other Boy sprang promptly to support the stranger.

"Help!" said he. "I can't hold him!" And in an instant George was at the stranger's other side. The man reeled about frightfully, and finally leaned his whole weight upon the boys, his body swaying, and his arms clutching their sides. At the same time two other gentlemen crowded close to them, crying, "What ails him?"

"I don't know," said the Other Boy. "Ease him down on the trunks here."

"No, no!" gasped out the suffering gentleman.

"Take me ashore! I'm not going in the boat. I shall be all right."

As he appeared to recover himself a little, declaring presently that his faintness had passed, and that he could walk, the two boys helped him to the wharf, where he thanked them warmly for their kindness. They left him leaning against a cab, and had just time to leap aboard again when the bridge was hauled in, the great paddles began to revolve, and the boat started.

"He's all right," cried the Other Boy, with satisfaction. "Just think, he might have got

(To be continued.)

carried off! Now, where's the man who promised to get us our tickets?"

"See here!" said George, feeling in his pocket, "pay for mine when you get yours, will you?" For George shrank from the responsibility of pushing into the crowd and making change.

"All right," said the Other Boy. "What's the matter with you?"

George stood, a picture of consternation, feeling first in one pocket, then in another, then in both.

"My pocket-book!" he said hoarsely.

The Other Boy comprehended the situation at once, and, thrusting his hands into his own pockets, became another picture of consternation, to match his friend.

"My purse! That rascal!" he cried, springing to the gangway.

He looked for the sick man leaning by the cab. He had disappeared. The steamer was already forty yards from the wharf. And there were our two youthful adventurers, embarked for the great unknown city in a crowd of passengers among whom they had not a friend, and without money enough about them to pay their fares even at "opposition" rates.

## A CARD FROM THE EDITOR OF "OUR YOUNG FOLKS."

THROUGH the courtesy of the Conductor of ST. NICHOLAS, I am enabled to say a few words to the readers of "Our Young Folks," in place of the many I should have wished to say in the last number of that lamented magazine, had it been known to be the last when it left the editorial hands.

That number was sent to its readers in the full faith that all it promised them for the coming year was to be more than fulfilled. But it had scarcely gone forth, when came the sudden change by which "Our Young Folks" ceased to exist—the result of a purely commercial transaction, wholly justifiable, I think, on the part of the publishers, J. R. Osgood and Company, of whose honorable and liberal conduct in all that related to the little magazine, up to the very last, I can speak with the better grace now that my editorial connection with their house has ceased.

Dear friends of "Our Young Folks," that I do not mourn the loss of our little favorite I will not pretend. Connected with it from its very birth nine years ago, and very intimately during the last three or four years, my interest in it had grown to be something more than that of a mere writer or editor—it filled a large place in my heart. I had been so long accustomed to regard its youthful

readers and correspondents as my personal friends, that I cannot now sever the special ties that joined me to them without a sense of personal bereavement.

But, dear friends, changes—though they often appear disguised as foes—are, if not blessings themselves, the parents of blessings and of all improvement. Although "Our Young Folks" was the pioneer of the better class of juvenile periodicals, there were many things about it which we would gladly have made different, could we have gone back, with our acquired experience, and projected its form and character anew. But it filled its place, and it is gone; and we believe that from its grave "violets will spring," to blossom amid the leaves of a more beautiful and more beloved successor. Such a successor ST. NICHOLAS promises to be. I sincerely trust that it may crown that promise with fulfillment, and so prove to the friends of "Our Young Folks" that their loss is but gain.

The serial story, prepared for the late magazine, is herewith transferred to ST. NICHOLAS; and through the continuation of the history of Jack Hazard's adventures I shall hope still to maintain a pleasant relation with former readers, keeping them FAST FRIENDS for another year.

J. T. TROWBRIDGE.

Not only the thousands of boys and girls who have grown to love the editor of "Our Young Folks," but hosts of others familiar with Mr. Trowbridge's writings, will rejoice to know that again, and for many a month, they may cluster about their old friend, to hear the story he is to tell in ST. NICHOLAS.

And so, though the much-loved magazine has passed away, our young folks will claim him still, and the claim, we trust, will grow stronger and heartier as the years roll on.

CONDUCTOR OF ST. NICHOLAS.

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## NIMPO'S TROUBLES.

BY OLIVE THORNE.

## CHAPTER I.

## GOING OUT TO BOARD.

THIS is the story of a real girl, no wiser and no better than you are. I hope you'll like her; and I'm sure you'll be interested to hear about her troubles. They were many and grievous, but the



NIMPO THINKS OVER HER TROUBLES.

greatest of all was, that she could not do as she pleased.

Now, I wouldn't be surprised if that were your special trouble too; and I'm going to tell you what Nimpo did about it.

Nimpo wasn't her real name, of course; it was one she had given herself before she could speak plainly, and she never had been able to get rid of it.

She had a habit of talking to herself, and the day my story begins, she had locked herself in her room, and was going on in a most passionate way:

"I don't believe anybody has such a hard time as I have! I never can do as I please! Here I am, most thirteen, and I never did as I had a mind to a single day! I just think it's too bad!

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"Mother *never* lets me go anywhere I want to,—at least, not unless every little thing is just *so*," she added, to qualify the rather surprising remark.

"I think she's horrid particular, anyway. Then she never lets me wear my new dress! I don't see any use of having a dress if you can't wear it, except just to church. Oh, dear! I do wish I could do as I please! Wouldn't I have a nice time?"

Having talked out her grief, though only to the unsympathizing walls, Nimpo felt better, and began to plan what she would do if that nice time should ever come. Her face brightened, and before long she was so deep in castle-building that she forgot her troubles, and when the tea bell rang she went pleasantly down stairs, not a bit like the abused damsel she thought herself.

Perhaps it was because "coming events cast their shadows before," for her nice time was much nearer than she thought. They were all at the table, when she took her place, and holding an animated discussion.

"Nimpo," said her father, "I'm going to take your mother with me to New York next week. How shall you like to keep house?"

"Are you—is he, mother?" exclaimed Nimpo, "and can I keep house?"

"I'm thinking about it," replied Mrs. Rievior, "but I don't see exactly how to arrange it. Sarah wants to go home for a month, or I could leave you with her. Perhaps I can get Mrs. Jackson to come and take care of you all."

"Oh, no! I can't bear Mrs. Jackson," Nimpo broke in; "can't I board somewhere?"

"That might do, Mary," said Mr. Rievior. "Perhaps that would be best. You would feel easier about them."

"I don't know who would take the care of three children on their hands," said Mrs. Rievior.

"Children!" said Nimpo, "I should think I was old enough to take care of myself."

Mrs. Rievior looked curiously at Nimpo, a moment, and a light seemed to break in on her mind. She thought, perhaps, it would be well for her little daughter to take care of herself a while. So she said she would think of it.

Well, she did think of it; and she went out the next morning to see about it, and when Nimpo came home from school she was greeted with a shout from Rush, who was swinging on the front gate.

"Oh, Nimpo! It's all settled, and we're going to Mrs. Primkins' to board. Ain't you glad?"

"I guess you'll have to learn better manners than to swing on a gate, if you're going to board out," said Nimpo, with great dignity. "I should be mortified to have Mrs. Primkins see such rude manners;" and she went into the house to see if the delightful news was really true.

"Oh, my! don't we feel grand!" shouted Rush, who was just at the teasing age in boys—if you know what age that is. According to my experience, it begins at nine or ten years of age, and ends—when does it end, boys?

But, for once, Nimpo did not care what he said. She was too much elated with her brilliant prospects to listen to him.

"Mother, have you got us a boarding place?" she asked, eagerly.

Mrs. Rievor smiled.

"Yes, dear; at least, Mrs. Primkins says she will take you, if, on the whole, it is decided to be best."

"Oh, I hope it will, mother! I don't want to stay here with that poky old Mrs. Jackson, to order me around."

"But you will find things very different there from what you are used to, my dear, and I'm afraid you'll be disappointed."

"Of course, things 'll be different," said Nimpo, loftily, "but I think I'd like a change. I don't think it's good for folks to live always in a rut." She had read that expression in a grown-up book, and thought it sounded striking.

But, seeing a peculiar smile on her mother's face, she went on earnestly—

"I always did want to board out, mother, and I think it 'll be just splendid."

"Well," said Mrs. Rievor, "perhaps it will be good for you, and if you prefer, you may try it."

So that was settled, and Nimpo thought her day of glory was coming in.

She went at once to her room, drew her trunk out of the closet, and began to look over her "things," to see which she would take. It was delightful to select them, and pack them away in boxes, and it made her feel as if she were going on a journey.

Rush was excited, too, though of course—being a boy—he would not own it. Pretty soon he came in.

"What 'r you doing, Nimpo?" he asked.

"Packing up," said Nimpo, from the closet, where she had gone to get her best shoes, so as to be sure and not forget them.

"Then we're to go, sure pop?"

"Yes, we're to go to Mrs. Primkins' to board. but I do wish you'd leave off such vulgar words," answered Nimpo.

"I mean to pack up, too," said he, prudently not hearing her last remark. "Nimpo, would you take your skates?"

"Skates!—in the middle of summer!" said she scornfully. "I think you'd better take a little common sense—if you've got any in your head. I wish you'd go out; you're in my way. I want to spread out my things on that bed."

Nimpo's room was a cozy bit of a place, with only room for a narrow bed, a little bureau, a stand, and one chair. So when Rush came in to see her, he always sat or lounged on the bed.

Before she went to sleep on that wonderful night, Nimpo had packed everything, except her dresses, and as it was a week before she went, she had to live in the trunk all that time.

But that—though rather inconvenient—was part of the fun.

She was a heroine at school for that week. The envy of the girls, and the happiest one of all. Lessons were not very well learned, notes passed around, and in fact the whole school was demoralized by her influence, because she was going to "board out," that being considered the height of felicity among the school girls of the village.

The airs she put on were wonderful to see. She did up her hair in a very tight knot behind, feeling too old for braids, and slyly let down a tuck in her dress.

You see she wasn't a bit like the good girls you read about; she was more like the girls you see—when you look in the glass.

Well, the week came to an end, as all weeks will if we're only patient, and the morning came on which Mr. and Mrs. Rievor were to start.

"Now, Nimpo," said her mother that morning, "I leave little Robbie to your tender care. Remember he's a baby, and will miss his mother. I'm sure you'll be kind to him, dear. And I want you to be more considerate with Rush. I know he is trying—"

"I should think he was!" broke in Nimpo.

"Well, I know he is; but it's only his rough way. Try to be patient with him. I want to speak to you of Mrs. Primkins, too. You'll find some things you're not used to, my dear, but I know she'll be kind to you, and I hope you will be respectful to her, and do as she wishes you to."

"Of course I shall be respectful, mother," said Nimpo, putting on her high and mighty air, "but I don't see why I should mind her. I'm sure I'm old enough to know what's right for me to do. I shall only be a boarder, any way."

"Well, daughter," were Mrs. Rievor's last words, "I hope you will be as happy as you expect."

"There's the stage!" shouted Rush from the front gate; and, sure enough, the old red stage,

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with its four white horses, came swinging around the corner, and stopped at the gate.

In a moment the trunks were strapped in the big "boot" behind. Father and mother said goodbye, and were packed in, the driver climbed to his seat, cracked his whip, and off they went, leaving Nimpo, Rush and Robbie at the gate, and black Sarah at the door.

Robbie began to cry, and even Rush felt a slight choke in his throat, but Nimpo was too much taken up with her brilliant prospect to feel unhappy.

"Now, Robbie," she began, in her most elder-sisterly way, "don't cry, dear; we're going up to our boarding place, and you'll see what fine times we'll have!"

"Hadh'n't ye better stay here till arter dinner?" said Sarah. "I won't get done clarin up 'fore the artemnoon, an' I kin jist as well cook y'r dinner."

"No, I thank you, Sarah," said Nimpo, loftily, "I want to take possession of my new rooms this morning."

Sarah smiled, but Rush shouted:

"Nimp's on her stilts again! I say, Nimp, don't forget to take the big dictionary up to old Primkins. They'll all have to study it if you keep on."

Nimpo threw a most withering look on him, but he didn't wither a bit. He only laughed louder, and Sarah said, quietly:

"Law, now! I reckon ye'll git off that ar high boss, 'fore you've been to Miss Primkins' a week. She ain't most like y'r ma, no ways."

Nimpo disdained reply.

"You can leave the key of the house with cousin Will, at the store, Sarah," she said with dignity.

"Yes, Miss Rievor," said Sarah, sarcastically.

"So y'r ma tole me? Lor! won't she git took down a peg!" she added, with a laugh to herself, the next minute, as Nimpo disappeared through the door.

The trunks had been carried up the day before; so nothing remained but to walk up there.

Nimpo started off, leading Robbie, and Rush, stopping to gather up a bow and arrow he was making, followed slowly along behind.

## CHAPTER II.

### MRS. PRIMKINS.

MRS. PRIMKINS lived in a two-story house, a block or two above Mr. Rievor's. It was the newest and most stylish-looking house on the street, and that was one reason Nimpo was pleased to go there.

Mrs. Primkins, however, was not stylish in the least. Her hair was cut short in her neck, her dress was short and scant, and in her whole figure

there was a tightened up ready-for-action look, that meant work. In fact, she was a kind-hearted, uneducated woman, whose life was spent in her kitchen, and who knew very little out of it.

She consented to take the children to board, because she wanted money to furnish her half-empty rooms.

When Nimpo reached the house, she went up to the front door, and finding no bell, gave a delicate, lady-like knock.

No reply.

She knocked again, louder this time. In a moment she heard a window opened, and Augusta Primkins put her head out.

"Go 'round the back way," she screamed.

"Well, I never!" said Nimpo, tossing her head; but she went, and there she found Mrs. Primkins washing dishes.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Primkins," she said. "I knocked at the front door, but could not make you hear."

"Laws!" cried Mrs. Primkins, stopping to look at her. "Why did n't you come right around? I don't expect to make company of you;" and she returned to her dish-pan.

"Will you be kind enough to show me my rooms?" asked Nimpo, with her grandest, young lady-like air.

Mrs. Primkins stopped now in earnest, stood a moment looking at the pompous young figure in the doorway, laughed a little to herself, wiped her hands on her apron, and then went to a door which seemed to lead up stairs.

"Au-gus-tee!" she screamed.

"Ma'am," came faintly down from the attic.

"Them Rievor children's come; you show them their rooms."

"Children, again!" thought poor Nimpo. "I'll soon show them I'm no child."

"I s'pose you'd s'lieves go up the back way?" said Mrs. Primkins, holding open the door.

"It makes no difference," said Nimpo, haughtily, and up she went.

When she got to the head of the stairs, she looked around for Augusta, but a voice came from above—

"Come up stairs, children."

Nimpo hesitated, and Mrs. Primkins called from below—

"Take the little door at your left hand."

Then Nimpo saw a narrow, unpainted door, which she opened. There was the next flight of stairs, regular garret stairs, narrow and steep. Up these she climbed, her heart boiling over with wrath.

"It can't be possible!" she said to herself, "that that horrid woman means to put us in the attic!"

But she did; for there stood Augusta at the head of the landing, and she pointed to two small, unpainted doors, on one side of the attic.

"Those are your rooms. You can divide them as you like."

"But I thought—but can't we have rooms down stairs?" stammered Nimpo, with tears of vexation in her eyes.

Augusta looked at her with surprise.

"There ain't a stick of furniture in the chambers. This is my room," and she opened the door of the front attic, showing a broad room, the whole width of the house, with a droll window half across the front. This window was in the peak of the roof, and, of course, it could not go up; so it was arranged with hinges, and hung down into the room. It was now open, and it looked as though half the wall was out.

But Nimpo turned away from this room, and with a swelling heart, opened one of the other doors.

The room was a small one, with sloping roof on one side. A bed was pushed under this low part, and before it stood a cheap stand and one wooden chair. A window at the end looked out upon a roof, and the kitchen chimney smoked away only five or six feet from the sash.

There was an awful crash of air castles in Nimpo's heart. She turned to look at the other room, but found it even worse; for it had no wash-stand at all. She returned to the first room, drew Robbie in, shut the door, sat down on the foot of the bed, and—burst into tears.

"Don't cry, Nimp," said Rush, by way of consolation, while Robbie climbed up by her and said:

"This room's too high up; that wall's going to fall down."

"It's real mean, anyhow," Rush went on, "to put us up in the garret like this. It ain't half so good as our house, for all it looks so grand!"

"Mean!" said Nimpo, who had recovered her voice. "It's horrid! the stingy old thing! I'll bet she did n't tell mother where she was going to put us! I'll never stay here—never! You see if I do."

Poor Nimpo seated herself disconsolately on the side of the bed, half hoping to hear the jingle of the dinner-bell; but it did not come. Instead of that, the lower door opened, and a shrill scream came up:

"Come to dinner, children!"

"Children, again!" said Nimpo. "I'll show her—"

They found the dinner table in the kitchen; to Nimpo's horror.

"You can set right down there," said Mrs. Primkins, pointing to a chair on one side of the table, "and Robbie can have the high

chair next to you. You, Rush, can set down by 'Augusty.'"

They took their seats. Mr. Primkins was already in his place. Nimpo tied on Robbie's bib, and looked around. I don't suppose she would really have cared much how her dinner was served, if she had n't dreamed so much, and worse yet—said so much about the style of boarding. But the dishes of coarse crockery, with blue edges, such as they used at home to bake pies on, the big, awkward knives and two-tined forks, the unleached tablecloth, the square table, with leaves propped up, so that you had to be careful not to hit the leg, or you might have your dinner in your lap—all these together were dreadful troubles just then.

Then there was the great piece of corned beef,—which she never could eat, and whole potatoes,—



"DEAR! DEAR! WHAT AN APPETITE BOYS DO HAVE!"

which she hated to peel, and boiled cabbage,—which she could just manage to swallow.

Mr. Primkins did not ask her what she would have. He piled a plate up with beef, potatoes, and cabbage, and handed it over to her in such a matter of course way, that she could not say a word. He did the same with Rush. Rush was hungry,—did you ever know a boy who was n't?—and he proceeded to dispose of his plateful; but Robbie began to fret.

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"Nimpo, I don't want that meat. I want some fat meat. I don't like that potato—it's a black potato."

"Never mind!" whispered Nimpo, blushing; "I'll fix it."

"Don't fix it!—take away that meat!" Robbie went on, ready to cry.

Nimpo hastily slipped the meat upon her own plate, peeled Robbie's potato, and mashed it for him, gave him a piece of fat from her plate, and after a while, with burning cheeks, was ready to cram her own dinner down.

Meantime, Rush had emptied his plate, and passed it up for more, at which Mrs. Primkins, who was nibbling around the edge of hers, said.

"Dear! dear! what an appetite boys do have!"—adding, as she saw Nimpo's indignant face:

"What would n't I give if I could eat like a boy!"

(To be continued.)

"Let him eat," was Mr. Primkins' remark, between two mouthfuls, "he's a-growin'."

That was the only remark he made. As soon as he had finished, he pushed back his chair, took his hat and went out. Mrs. Primkins also left the table the moment she had finished, and, finally, Nimpo found herself left alone with Robbie, who was very slow to eat, lingering as little folks will.

"Come, Bub, ain't you through?" said Mrs. Primkins. "I can't dawdle round all day. I want to get the dishes done up."

Nimpo hurried him off, and rushed up stairs once more, in a blaze of indignation, while Mrs. Primkins said to herself, as she cleared the table—

"Too many airs for my time o' day! the pert little huzzy! can't eat corned beef! humph! I'll have to take her down a bit, 'fore I can live with her," and by the way the table-cloth was jerked off, you'd think she meant to do it, too.

## BEING A BOY.

BY CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER.

If I was obliged to be a boy, and a boy in the country—the best kind of boy to be, in the summer—I would be about ten years of age. As soon as I got any older, I would quit it. The trouble with a boy is that just as he begins to enjoy himself he is too old, and has to be set to doing something else. If a country boy were wise he would stay at just that age when he could enjoy himself most, and have the least expected of him in the way of work.

Of course the perfectly good boy will always prefer to work and to do "chores" for his father and errands for his mother and sisters, rather than enjoy himself in his own way. I never saw but one such boy. He lived in the town of Goshen—not the place where the butter is made, but a much better Goshen than that. And I never saw *him*, but I heard of him; and being about the same age, as I supposed, I was taken once from Zoah, where I lived, to Goshen to see him. But he was dead. He had been dead almost a year, so that it was impossible to see him. He died of the most singular disease: it was from *not* eating green apples in the season of them. This boy, whose name was Solomon, before he died, would rather split up kindling-wood for his mother than go a-fishing—the consequence was that he was kept at splitting kindling-wood and such work most of the time, and grew a

better and more useful boy day by day. Solomon would not disobey his parents and eat green apples—not even when they were ripe enough to knock off with a stick—but he had such a longing for them, that he pined, and passed away. If he had eaten the green apples he would have died of them, probably; so that his example is a difficult one to follow. In fact, a boy is a hard subject to get a moral from, any way. All his little play-mates who ate green apples came to Solomon's funeral, and were very sorry for what they had done.

John was a very different boy from Solomon, not half so good, nor half so dead. He was a farmer's boy, as Solomon was, but he did not take so much interest in the farm. If John could have had his way he would have discovered a cave full of diamonds, and lots of nail-kegs full of gold pieces and Spanish dollars, with a pretty little girl living in the cave, and two beautifully caparisoned horses, upon which, taking the jewels and money, they would have ridden off together, he did not know where. John had got thus far in his studies, which were apparently arithmetic and geography, but were in reality the "Arabian Nights," and other books of high and mighty adventure. He was a simple country boy, and did not know much about the world as it

is, but he had one of his own imagination, in which he lived a good deal. I dare say he found out soon enough what the world is, and he had a lesson or two when he was quite young, in two incidents, which I may as well relate.

If you had seen John at this time you might have thought he was only a shabbily dressed country lad, and you never would have guessed what beautiful thoughts he sometimes had as he went stubbing his toes along the dusty road, nor what a chivalrous little fellow he was. You would have seen a short boy, barefooted, with trowsers at once too big and too short, held up perhaps by one suspender only, a checked cotton shirt, and a hat of braided palmleaf, frayed at the edges and bulged up in the crown. It is impossible to keep a hat neat if you use it to catch bumble-bees and whisk 'em; to bail the water from a leaky boat; to catch minnows in; to put over honey-bees' nests, and to transport pebbles, strawberries, and hens' eggs. John usually carried a sling in his hand, or a bow, or a limber stick, sharp at one end, from which he could sling apples a great distance. If he walked in the road, he walked in the middle of it, scuffling up the dust; or if he went elsewhere, he was likely to be running on the top of the fence or the stone wall, and chasing chipmunks.

John knew the best place to dig sweet-flag in all the farm; it was in a meadow by the river, where the bobolinks sang so gaily. He never liked to hear the bobolink sing, however, for he said it always reminded him of the whetting of a scythe, and *that* reminded him of spreading hay; and if there was anything he hated it was spreading hay after the mowers. "I guess you wouldn't like it yourself," said John, "with the stubbs getting into your feet, and the hot sun, and the men getting ahead of you, all you could do."

Towards evening, once, John was coming along the road home with some stalks of the sweet-flag in his hand; there is a succulent pith in the end of the stalk which is very good to eat, tender, and not so strong as the root; and John liked to pull it, and carry home what he did not eat on the way. As he was walking along he met a carriage, which stopped opposite to him; he also stopped and bowed, as country boys used to do in John's day. A lady leaned from the carriage, and said:

"What have you got, little boy?"

She seemed to be the most beautiful woman John had ever seen; with light hair, dark, tender eyes, and the sweetest smile. There was that in her gracious mien and in her dress which reminded John of the beautiful castle ladies, with whom he was well acquainted in books. He felt that he knew her at once, and he also seemed to be a sort

of young prince himself. I fancy he didn't look much like one. But of his own appearance he thought not at all, as he replied to the lady's question, without the least embarrassment:

"It's sweet-flag stalk; would you like some?"

"Indeed, I should like to taste of it," said the lady with a most winning smile. "I used to be ever so fond of it when I was a little girl."

John was delighted that the lady should like sweet-flag, and that she was pleased to accept it from him. He thought himself that it was about the best thing to eat he knew. He handed up a large bunch of it. The lady took two or three stalks, and was about to return the rest, when John said:

"Please keep it all, ma'am. I can get lots more. I know where it's ever so thick."

"Thank you, thank you," said the lady; and as the carriage started she reached out her hand to John. He did not understand the motion, until he saw a cent drop in the road at his feet. Instantly all his illusion and his pleasure vanished. Something like tears were in his eyes as he shouted:

"I don't want your cent. I don't sell flag!"

John was intensely mortified. "I suppose," he said, "she thought I was a sort of beggar-boy. To think of selling flag!"

At any rate, he walked away and left the cent in the road, a humiliated boy. The next day he told Jim Gates about it. Jim said he was green not to take the money; he'd go and look for it now, if he would tell him about where it dropped. And Jim did spend an hour poking about in the dirt, but he did not find the cent. Jim, however, had an idea; he said he was going to dig sweet-flag, and see if another carriage wouldn't come along.

John's next rebuff and knowledge of the world was of another sort. He was again walking the road at twilight, when he was overtaken by a wagon with one seat, upon which were two pretty girls, and a young gentleman sat between them, driving. It was a merry party, and John could hear them laughing and singing as they approached him. The wagon stopped when it overtook him, and one of the sweet-faced girls leaned from the seat and said, quite seriously and pleasantly:

"Little boy, how's your mar?"

John was surprised and puzzled for a moment. He had never seen the young lady, but he thought that she perhaps knew his mother; at any rate his instinct of politeness made him say:

"She's pretty well, I thank you."

"Does she know you are out?"

And thereupon all three in the wagon burst into a roar of laughter, and dashed on.

It flashed upon John in a moment that he had

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been imposed on, and it hurt him dreadfully. His self-respect was injured somehow, and he felt as if his lovely, gentle mother had been insulted. He would like to have thrown a stone at the wagon, and in a rage, he cried:

"You're a nice"—but he couldn't think of any hard, bitter words quick enough.

Probably the young lady, who might have been almost any young lady, never knew what a cruel thing she had done.

## JAPANESE GAMES.

BY A JAPANESE BOY.

[Here are three games that may be worth trying during the Christmas holidays. They are very popular in Japan; and I trust American boys and girls will find some fun in them.—ICHIYU ZO HATTORI.]

### "HEBI NO O WO TORO," OR CATCHING SNAKE'S TAIL.

SEVERAL players choose one, in any manner agreed upon, to be an "Oni," or catcher. Then all but the "Oni" stand in a row, one behind the other, each one's hand being placed on the shoulder of the player in the front of him or her. The tallest player generally stands at the head, and the shortest at the end; or, in the language of the game, the "O," or tail of the row.

The "Oni" stands, facing the head of the row, at the distance of about twenty feet from him.

Now the play commences.

The "Oni" tries to catch the "O," or the tail of the row, while the head of the row and row itself defend the "O."

If the "Oni" pushes any one in the row, or the row is broken, it is foul.

When the "O" is caught, he or she takes the position of the "Oni," and the retiring "Oni" takes his or her place in the row, and they repeat the game.

### "KO WO TORO."

THE "Ko wo toro" is the same as the "Catching Snake's tail" in the arrangement of row and choosing of a catcher.

In "Ko wo toro," the head of the row is called "Oya" (father or mother), and the others, "Ko" (children).

When they take their respective positions, the catcher calls out, "Ko wo toro, Ko toro" (will catch a child! will catch a child!). The "Oya" asks then, "Dono Ko ga hoshii kaz?" (which child do you want?). To this the catcher answers, calling the first, second, third, or whichever he wants to

catch, counting from the head toward the other end of the row. Then the "Oya" says, "Tore ruka totte miro" (try to catch if you can).

This is the signal of the battle.

The catcher pursues the one whom he named, and the column moves in all directions, and in any shape, to defend the "Ko."

During the struggle, the "Oya" can stretch his hands to prevent the catcher's progress; but he cannot push the catcher, nor can the catcher push any one in the column.

If the column is broken, it is foul.

When the catcher catches the one whom he aimed at, he changes his position, just as in the "Hebi no O wo toro."

### "TEMARI," OR HAND-BALL.

THE "Temari" is a ball about two inches in diameter, and made generally of cotton, wound around with thread, so that it keeps its roundness and is elastic. Its outside is often ornamented with different figures, made of threads of various colors.

A number of girls stand in a circle, and one of them—for example, Miss A.—takes the hand-ball, and throws it perpendicularly on the ground, and when it rebounds, she strikes it back toward the ground with her open hand. If it rebounds again toward her she continues in the same manner as before. But if it flies away, the one toward whom the ball flies, or who is the nearest to the direction of the flying ball, strikes it toward the ground, as Miss A. has done; and the game continues until any of the players misses her stroke, or fails to make the ball rebound. Then she is cast out of the company, and the others play again in the same way as before, until another girl fails and is cast away.

The same process continues until there is left only one girl,—the one who gets the honor of "Kachi," or victory in the game.



## BABY'S THOUGHTS.

"WHAT is the little one thinking about?" It is very easy to guess. The picture book has dropped from her hands; mamma—who so often has read its fairy tales to her—has left the room, and while Prince will yet find Cinderella? Does n't she know that sister Anne will see "somebody coming" to rescue poor Mrs. Blue Beard just at the right moment, and does n't she know that Jack-the-



baby waits for somebody to come and dress her, wonderful fancies are flitting through her little head.

She sees Cinderella rushing home from the ball, leaving her beautiful glass slipper behind her; she sees Blue Beard lift his cruel scimitar over his poor, inquisitive little wife; she sees Jack-the-Giant-Killer marching away to deeds of deadly daring.

"But," you say, "these are not pleasant things to think about; it would be well for mamma to come back."

Ah! that is the best part of it. Baby never was happier. Does n't she know very well that the

Giant-Killer will rescue whole castlesful of distressed damsels?

And are not the fairies whispering pretty things in her ear; and is n't Puss-in-boots standing, cap in hand, to wish her a merry Christmas?

What wonder mamma finds Baby as bright as a rose when she comes in!

We must tell you that this lovely picture of Baby was drawn for ST. NICHOLAS, by a young girl now studying art in Italy. Her sketch has come a long way, to be sure—from Capri to New York—but what are a few thousand miles compared to the wonderful, wonderful distances reached by Baby's thoughts!

## THE BEE AND THE BUTTERFLY.

"DEAR me! dear me!"  
Said a busy bee,  
"I'm always making honey,—  
No time to play,  
But work all day.  
Is n't it very funny—  
Very, very funny?"

"Oh, my! oh, my!"  
Said a butterfly,  
"I'm always eating honey;  
And yet I play  
The livelong day.  
Is n't it very funny—  
Very, very funny?"

## BERTIE.

"I so awful bad! Santy Claus won't come down the chimney one bit," said little Bertie, and he began to cry. Bertie was not four years old, and he did not know just how to act. He had pulled the cat's tail, and upset the milk-pan, and, oh, dear! worse than all, he had gone behind his grandma when she was bending over the fire, and said Boo! so loud that it made her jump, and drop her spectacles, pop! into the tea-kettle. So he sat down on the floor, with his old fur cap on, to think about it; for this was Christmas eve.

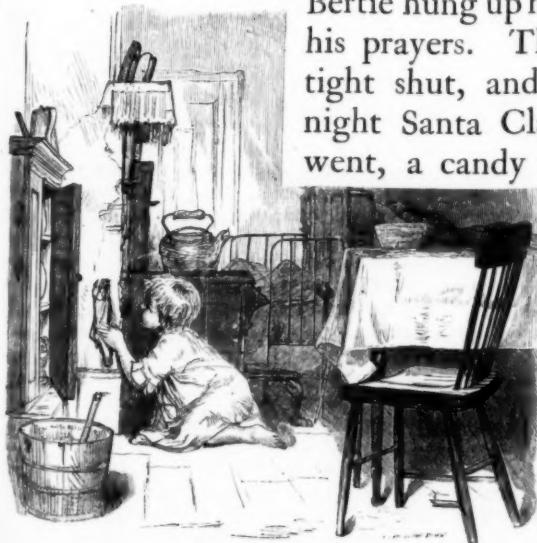


But bless his heart! Grandma loved him if he did say Boo! at her. So did Mamma and Papa, and so did Pussy, and so did Santa Claus! When it was bed-time for Bertie, he wanted Grandma to go to bed, too, though it was not dark, so that Santa Claus would be sure to come. Grandma put on a funny cap, and hid under the bed-clothes, and

Bertie hung up his stocking before he said his prayers. Then he squeezed his eyes tight shut, and went to sleep. In the night Santa Claus came, and before he went, a candy cat, a top, a ball, an or-

ange, a barking dog and a jumping Jack, all went softly into Bertie's stocking, and waited for him to open his eyes.

Oh, how glad he was when he woke in the morning!

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## HALF A LOAF IS BETTER THAN NO BREAD.

(Translation of French Story in December Number.)

FEW young persons know the origin of this celebrated proverb.

In the year eleven hundred and eleven, the Grand Duchess Caroline Van Swing and her four lovely children assembled in the state kitchen of her castle, to enjoy their simple breakfast. In those early days condensed milk was not known, so the poor noble children were obliged to use common milk; but they had condensed bread, and that was a great satisfaction. The Grand Duchess herself made ready to prepare the meal, for, said she, with tears of affection, "Though a duchess, am I not a mother?" And the yells of her hungry little ones answered the question most eloquently.

The noble lady, taking up a loaf, then seized the very knife with which her noble grandsire had conquered a hundred foes. Brandishing it in the air for an instant, she soon, with one powerful, steady stroke, cut the condensed loaf in two, after the manner of all noble duchesses. As she did so, the severed half fell to the ground with a loud sound, and the family dog, which had been watching the Duchess, leaped forth from his corner of the great fire-place. Seizing the bread with his jaws, he bounded from the room, bearing his prize, amid the cries and screams of her dear children.

The noble mother, in her anguish at losing half of her loaf, instantly rushed to the door, and threw the remaining half at the wicked animal.

This, hitting him on the head, made him drop his prize and howl pitifully. Meantime, a donkey passing by swallowed both parts of the loaf in two mouthfuls. The dog returned to the house, humbled and penitent.

"He will never steal again," said the Grand Duchess, gazing fondly at her weeping children. "Why do you weep, my dears? But for the half loaf left in my hands, I could never have punished Athelponto. Console yourselves. Do you not see that half a loaf is better than no bread?"

"O yes, mother!" cried those noble children, quite willing to go without their breakfast, since Athelponto was cured of a bad fault.

Alas! what boy or girl of the present day would so sacrifice comfort to principle?

The saying of the Grand Duchess has been handed down from generation to generation, but its meaning has changed. When the mothers of to-day wish to teach their children to be contented with a little, they say: "Half a loaf is better than no bread."

The world is not so heroic as it was in the days of the Grand Duchess Caroline Van Swing.

## NEW TOYS AND GAMES FOR THE CHILDREN.

ST. NICHOLAS expects to be always on the lookout for new games and playthings, so that our little folk and their parents may be told the latest inventions from Toy-land. But this number goes to press too early for us to speak of all the beautiful and wonderful things that are in store for the coming holidays.

So far, we have been able to examine only a few games, some of which are new, and all good, and well worth recommending to our young friends.

For the older children, one of the new games is "Naval Chess; or, The Admiral's Blockade," a capital entertainment, not complicated, but with all the absorbing interest of chess.

The "Quartette Game of American History," is another. It is historical, amusing and instructive.

The "Lightning Express; or, How to Travel,"

will set one thinking of what he never thought of before; and "Crispino" is one of the best games out.

"Popular Characters from Dickens," is also a new, and a most interesting game.

Another new game is called "Spectrum, or Prismatic Backgammon." It may be played by any number from two to six, and is very exciting. It can be learned by seeing the game played once, and the newest player will often go far ahead of all his competitors.

We must not omit "Totem," a capital little game for the wee ones, with fine pictures of birds and beasts.

And we *must* tell about "Avilude," or the game of birds. It has sixty-four large cards, of unusual beauty. On thirty-two are excellent engravings of birds, and on the others are correct and en-

tertaining descriptions of the same, which players are sure to read. Old and young will be interested in this scientific, yet delightful entertainment.

"The Checkered Game of Life" is not new, but is very captivating—quite as much so as are the new games, "Eskemeq" and "The Lucky Traveler," which last, however, are certainly very entertaining and amusing. The new "Railroad Game," and the games of "Authors," "Poets," "Mythology," and "Popular Quotations," will tend to make young Solomons of the children before they know it; while "Poetical Pot-Pie" (a tip-top game), "Silhouette Comicalities" revised, the "Old Curiosity Shop," "The Tickler," "The House that Jack Built" (a Kindergarten game), "Comic Portraits," and the ever new "Zoëtrope," will cause them to laugh and grow fat.

Of puzzles, that are new, we have: "The Blind Abbot and Monks," a mathematical puzzle; "Japanese Pictures," and "Scroll" puzzles; the "Jack-o'-Lantern," and "Star Alphabet" puzzles.

"The Chinese Perforated Target" is an excellent puzzle, which will amuse and delight both old and young.

The "Eureka" puzzle is a mystery, with a string, which is never ending, and always beginning; and the "Centennial" is a wire tease, hard to find out.

The new "Cage" puzzle will put the girls and boys on their mettle. The difficulty is to get the ball out of the cage, without injury to the columns.

"The Magical Trick Box" is a delightful source of amusement. A boy can carry it in his pocket to a party, and delight his friends all the evening, with his help.

"The Spectograph" is a novel invention, by means of which a child may make an accurate drawing without any previous instruction. It would be a precious gift for a little invalid.

Another admirable amusement for the little ones, sick or well, is the "Kindergarten Weaving and Braiding Work." Paper mats, dolls' carpets, tidies, &c., can be woven by their cunning little fingers, with one or two lessons.

"The Kindergarten Alphabet and Building Blocks" is a great invention. The child learns to read, while he thinks he is playing.

The "Combination Toy-Blocks" are also excellent. Furniture, buildings, boats, forts,—hundreds of objects,—can be constructed by these blocks, making of them an endless source of amusement.

There is a new table or carpet game, called,

"Lozette," which promises considerable amusement. It is of the same class as the "Trap Game," and "Lozo Pendulum Board."

Of toy picture books, the "Little Folk Series," and "Uncle Ned's Picture Books," are just out. Also, four kinds of gilt-covered picture books; among them, "Dickens' Christmas Story," illustrated by Thomas Nast. The immortal Mother Goose makes her appearance in a new dress; and Dolly Varden paper dolls of large size, have "come out" for the first time this season.

The funniest new steam-engine toy is a colored gentleman, who stands on a platform on top of a little steam engine. Fire up the engine, and he has to dance, whether he wishes to or not.

Of banks, a most useful gift in these hard times, the new one has a race-course on top, to show you where you must *not* put your money. It is a very comical bank, indeed.

Another bank, not so new, but just as good, has a great bull-frog sitting on the top. You pinch his foot, and he opens his mouth, into which you pop the money, when he immediately winks at you—as much as to say, "That was fine! Give me another."

It would be a hopeless task to attempt to enumerate all the delights in preparation for our young friends of ST. NICHOLAS.

There are many other games to be found in the shops, not new, but dear to the boy and girl heart, such as "Ring-toss," "Magic Hoops," and "Parlor Croquet." "Smashed up Locomotive," "Dissected Yacht," and "Flag of all Nations," will please the boys. "Uncle Raphael's Puzzle-Chromos," and "Popping the Question," and many others, will delight the girls.

Then there are the mechanical toys and small steam engines, and very curious running rings which tumble, tumble, and yet are never gone; and the centenary gun or cannon, which you can load Monday morning and pop away until Saturday night, in the most perfectly safe and delightful manner.

If we were to go on with all that is made for the delight of children ST. NICHOLAS would have to be a book too big for a giant to handle; so we must stop.

Our boys and girls who wish any of these toys, may find them at nearly all the leading toy shops in the United States. Other shops also sell toys and games during the holiday season, but that seems hardly fair.



JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS to you, my dears, and a very Happy New Year!

And now, before we begin the paragrams let us give three rousing cheers for ST. NICHOLAS. All join in. Hip, hip, hurrah!

Once more,— Again,— Ha! ha! that was a good one. Now you shall hear what the birds have been telling me:

#### A FLOATING COLLEGE.

SOMEBODY has started a new idea. He proposes that, as a change from stationary colleges, there shall be a steamship fitted up just like a college on dry land in every respect, except that it is to be set afloat and sent wandering about the world. In this way students may study geography by going right to the spot, and in fact see for themselves all that they are studying about this funny globe and its men and manners. Pretty good idea; but I'm afraid the freshman class will be hanging over the edge of the—college, in a wilted condition, most of the time; that they'll get sick of the thing, in short. I told a sea-gull friend of mine about it the other day and he said it was his opinion that the land-gulls were getting rather ahead this time.

#### HE BEGAN IT FIRST.

WE Jack-in-the-Pulpits get heartily tired of the never-ending quarrel as to whether "Katy-did" or "Katy didn't." But I'm told that humankind have queer ways, too, in their disputes and tiffs. They're very apt to think that if *they* don't begin a fight they've a right to keep it up in about any way they choose. A dear old crow lately told me this true story about a boy named Harry, who used to get angry very quickly and revenge himself right off. His parents usually made light of his quarrels if Harry only said of the other fellow "he began it first." So it came to be a common excuse with him. Once he went with his mother to visit a rich family who had mirrors reaching from the ceiling

to the floor. Harry had never seen such things before. It was a very hot summer day, and as the little fellow soon became tired of playing by himself in the sun, he slipped into the quiet parlor, and lying down on a sofa opposite one of these big mirrors, fell asleep. After a while he awoke; rubbing his eyes as he stood up, he saw a boy rubbing his eyes, too. He looked at him wonderingly, then fiercely, and the boy looked just as fiercely at him. In a moment Harry doubled up his fist, and the boy did the same. This was too much to bear and he darted towards the boy (as he thought) and dashing his fist against the mirror, broke it in a thousand pieces.

Hearing the crash, his mother ran in from the next room, and poor Harry, picking himself up, all scratched and bleeding, cried out, "He began it first."

#### THE FOOLISH TADPOLES.

TALKING of quarrels reminds me of two tadpoles I heard wrangling one day in our pond.

Tadpoles are the queerest looking things that ever swam—no legs at all, very long tails, bright black eyes, round bodies, and thin skins.

Said the larger tadpole to the smaller, "I do wish I had legs just to kick *you* with. You're the sauciest tadpole I ever saw."

"What did I do to you?" asked the other.

"You know what you did," replied the larger; "You made faces at me."

"I did n't," said the small one.

"You did; and awful faces, too," said the other; "I'm so mad I feel as though I could burst, and now, I think of it again, I *will* burst!" And he *did* burst; and his skin fell off. Next his tail began to disappear, and he displayed four lovely legs!

"Well, I never!" said the small tadpole, "Where *did* you get those legs? And, now that you have got them, are you going to kick me?"

"When I wanted to kick you," answered the other, puffing himself out until he was as round as a ball, "I was a tadpole. *Now*, I am a FROG, and you are beneath my notice! Swim away, sonny."

#### THE PACIFIC CABLE.

YOU know that we have an Atlantic cable to bring us news every morning of what the kings and emperors and the peoples of Europe are doing day by day. Across the blue Atlantic ocean, three thousand miles wide, the telegraph wires are stretched, and people on either side can talk with one another, as if they were near neighbors.

And before many months there is to be a Pacific cable; yes, across the great ocean, ten thousand miles wide, that lies between America and Asia.

When this long cable is stretched across under the waves, your papa will read to your mamma at breakfast, all about the important events that have



happened in Japan and China the day before; and you children can order your Chinese fire-crackers by telegraph.

#### QUIPS AND CATCHES.

HERE are some hints for a good time when you're sitting with the folks around the fire. A magpie told them to a friend of mine:

The Reverend Mr. Duzzen, when asked how many little girls he had, replied, "I've seven boys, and a sister for each." How many children had he?

Why, eight, of course. But I'll wager most Jacks would say fourteen. Try them.

A blind beggar had a brother. The brother died. But the deceased never had a brother. Now what relation was the blind beggar to the deceased?

(Whisper.)—HIS SISTER.

Jabez slept on the very top floor of the cottage. Now, what was the reason he always got up to breakfast and always went down to dinner?

Ans.—Because he had a good appetite.

I was half an hour trying to guess that. If there's anything I do dread it is a ridiculous, chatting magpie.

A parrot-friend of mine, who pronounces her words abominably, once asked me what amphibious animal I'd make, if I were to smash a clock. When I gave it up, she said, "Why, you'd *crack a dial*, of course. Pretty Poll!"

#### BAD READING.

THE other day a little chap sat near my neighbor Sumac, reading a book. And, when suddenly he saw his father coming along, he clapped the book out of sight, and stood up in great confusion, waiting for his father to pass by. Now, I did n't like that; and I herewith advise that boy, and all other boys, never to read anything they're ashamed of. Open out every page you read, full and free in God's light and presence, as you must, and if it is n't fit to be opened so, don't read it at all.

Bad reading is a deadly poison; and I, for one, would like to see the poisoners—that is, the men who furnish it—punished like any other murderers;—yes, and more,—for it's worse to kill the soul than to kill the body.

In my opinion, parents are not half watchful enough in this matter, and if I were you young folks, I would n't stand it.

#### EASY SPELLING LESSON FOR BIG FOLK.

I HEARD some fun the other day. Half a dozen youngsters were down our meadow with a couple of teachers digging for sassafras roots. After a while they sat down close by me to rest, and one of the boys, as mischievous a little chap as you'll see in a month of Sundays, took a bit of paper out of his pocket and says to the teachers: "Would you mind saying an easy spellin' lesson to us children,

sirs?" "Certainly not," said the teachers, looking very much astonished.

By the way, I ought to tell you that the teachers, just before, had been asking some school questions of the children, and looking very solemn and disappointed because the poor little things could n't answer them.

"It's a *very* easy lesson, sirs," said Hal, the mischievous youngster; "none of 'em over four letters, and my papa says they're all good words c it of Webster's big dictionary, not obsolete either."

"*Obsolete*, Hal," corrected the teacher, in a bland but awful voice.

"Obsolete, sir," said Hal, meekly; so he opened out the bit of paper and began to "hear the teachers," with the other five children all looking over his shoulder.

"Spell and define, GITH."

"G-i-t-h, gith," said the teachers, but they could n't give any definition.

"GOWT."

"G-o-u-t," said the teachers.

"Wrong," says Hal; "it's G-o-w-t." But the teachers did n't know of any such word.

Well, Hal kept on the list, and only two words in the whole lot could those teachers answer! They laughed in spite of themselves, and it seemed as if the children would have fits. As for me, I shook so that I frightened off three butterflies who were going to alight on my shoulder.

Here 's Hal's list. Suppose you try it on some of the big folks in your neighborhood. Turn about is fair play:

SARD	ANIL	ALB	AWN	NOG	NEB	GEST
DOIT	OST	HIN	HOLM	WHIN	OUCH	GOWT
AGIO	GITH	AI	SHAG	AIT	ANTA	HOLT

#### FLOWER CROSSES BY THE WAY-SIDE.

HERE is something about Brittany, in France. Many of the little boys and girls, who live there, watch, all day long, the cows in the fields, or flocks of sheep on the hills. But the hours would be tedious if they sat with their hands folded all the time. So, while sitting on the green earth, watching the cows sleepily chewing their cud, or the sheep browsing on the grass, the little peasants busy themselves in making flower crosses. They always form the cross with the branches of the furze, and then fasten to its thorns daisies and the pretty flowers of the broom; and when the cross is done, they set it up by the way-side in the hedge fences. Sometimes a long row of these flower crosses may be seen on the hedges. Do you know what Jack thinks? Jack thinks that it's a very good plan to set up flower crosses along the hedges of life; and that, when real flowers are scarce, these crosses can be made of kind looks and pleasant words. Is n't it so, my dears?

## BOOKS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

JUST now, in anticipation of the holidays, the publishers are showering down their gift-books by the dozen, in bindings gay as autumn leaves. One would almost think ST. NICHOLAS had tumbled his whole library out for the benefit of his boys and girls; for the very prettiest of all are for them; but, of course, the dear old saint cannot be expected to put on his glasses, and read them, every one, with his own eyes. He seems to take it for granted that whatever is written for his little folks will be sweet and wholesome, and he leaves it for the parents and friends to select the book that suits them best. In this, some are guided by the publishers, some by the author's name, and some by the color of the binding. But, alas! a gay binding is often a delusion, and even an author's name may occasionally mislead one as to the nature of a book. Take, for example, Miss Phelps' new story, in its gold and purple covers, just issued by Osgood & Co., of Boston.

Miss Phelps is a delightful writer, and her fearless pen has done good service in many a worthy cause; but, for all that, we cannot help feeling that *Trotty's Wedding Tour* is a sad mistake. Some of us have heard of Trotty before, how he married Miss Nita Thayer; and he is the same foolish boy still. If he goes on as he has begun, he hardly can fail to become either a Blue Beard or a Brigham Young. But, poor little fellow! he is to be pitied rather than blamed; for, certainly of himself, so mere a baby could never have learned the meaning of duels and divorces. If he were the Last Boy, then the Last Man and his wife could afford to be very much amused by him; but, for the sake of all little boys and girls, present and to come, we are sorry his history has been invented.

We turn with a sense of relief from Trotty and his unhappy little wives to *Whittier's Child-Life, in Prose*, published by the same house.

"The soul of genius and the heart of childhood are one," says the poet-editor; and the book is a collection of some of the daintiest and brightest bits of genius to be found in children's literature. As in "Child-Life in Poetry,"—the companion book to the present volume,—Mr. Whittier has been assisted by Miss Lucy Larcom, of whose taste and judgment he makes grateful mention in the preface; and the thanks of our little folk are due to both these gentle friends.

The book is handsomely bound and illustrated; and boys and girls who now turn its pages with delight, will like it better and better as the years go on.

*Matt's Follies*, and other stories, by Mary N. Prescott, is another handsome volume from Messrs. J. R. Osgood & Co.

Though Matt is a "live" boy, up to mischief in every shape and form, we like him immensely; but we pity Aunt Jane, and hope that, for her sake, at least, the young man will try to mend his ways.

All the stories in this book are bright, happy and wholesome.

From Robert Carter & Bros. comes *Fanny's Birthday Gift*, by that charming writer, Joanna H. Mathews.

One of the heroes of this pleasant story is Robbie, Fanny's little brother, who, on her birthday, presents to her a picture of his own execution. Like many another production of genius, it is something of a puzzle at first, but proves, according to Robbie's explanation to be "Balaam's ass carryin' on and kickin' up like anything, 'cause the Philistines tied a tin kettle to his tail; and George Washington, who was always kind to animals, was tryin' to take it off." How Fanny kept a straight face when that picture was explained, it is hard to see; but she did,—the book says so,—and thanked the little artist just as heartily as she thanked the others for their more elegant gifts.

There is a book—*Stedman's Poems*—just published by Osgood & Co.—which we have read with great satisfaction, and which, though it is not a child's book, we should like to see given to every young person we know. The poems all are in pure, simple English, and nearly all have a grand story to tell. Better still, they are the songs of a true poet,—an American poet,—who, ripe scholar and man of the world that he is, still cherishes his youth, and has an echo in his ringing verse for all that is highest in the heart of a noble boy or girl.

*Children of the Olden Time*, re-published by Scribner, Armstrong & Co., is an out-of-the-common and instructive book, by the author of "A Trap to Catch a Sunbeam," and one of the most fascinating little volumes we have seen for many a day. Though dedicated to the children of England, it will be equally attractive to the children on this side of the ocean.

Five tasteful books come to our table, just as this number of ST. NICHOLAS is going to press:

The first, *What Katy Did at School* (Roberts Bros.), is a sequel to *What Katy Did*, by good

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My

Susan Coolidge, who holds one of the brightest and bravest pens that ever wrote for young readers.

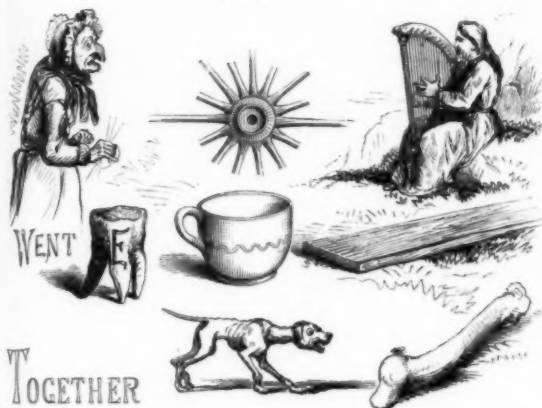
The second is, *Giles' Minority*, by Mrs. Robert O'Reilly, whose *Doll World* is a delight to all real girls and women.

The third, by Mrs. Eiloart (from G. P. Putnam's Sons), is called, *The Boy with an Idea*,—

a good many ideas, we should say, judging from the table of contents, which is a boy's novel in itself. And then there are two others, (from Macmillan & Co). *Queer Folk*, by Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, who wrote "Tales at Tea-time," and other funny books; and *Young Prince Marigold*, by John Francis Maguire.

## THE RIDDLE BOX.

### REBUS.



### NUMERICAL ENIGMA.

I AM composed of 20 letters:

1. My 12, 13, 15, 7, 8, 20. Hark! how merrily they ring on this crisp Christmas morn.

2. My 16, 17, 1, 5. A twinkling little light, that led the Eastern seekers to our Lord.

3. My 18, 15, 10, 17, 13. Dear St. Nick to the hearts of his patrons brings this!

4. My 2, 3. Little reader, it's only I!

5. My 9, 19, 11. Light in this form was the key to a grand discovery.

6. My 12, 13, 8, 14, 4, 6. A tree or its fruit.

My whole, dear friend, sincerely I wish you.

### CHARADE.

My first comes from the Emerald Isle,  
Or else is given in play;  
My second is a useful grain,  
Or else a crooked way.

My last is silver, paper, shell.  
Sometimes 't is ruddy gold;  
Or else it is a Scottish word—  
At least, so we are told.

My whole, though hoarded by the sire,  
Is wasted by the son.  
With all the hints that I now give,  
My meaning must be won.

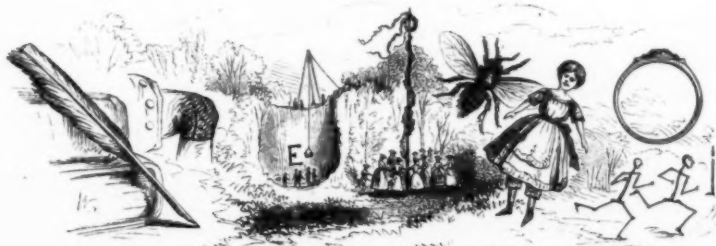
### SYNCOPE.

My name, as you will plainly see,  
Denotes a flower, but not a tree;  
Syncope, then give me hay,  
And you can ride me far away.

### CROSS WORD.

My first is in bugle, but not in horn.  
My second in meal, but not in corn.  
My third is in oyster, but not in clam.  
My fourth is in sheep, but not in lamb.  
My fifth is in cut, but not in shave.  
My sixth is in good, but not in brave.  
My seventh is in dance, but not in jig.  
My eighth is in sloop, but not in brig.  
My ninth is in prune, but not in fig.  
The letters placed rightly, all clear and distinct.  
Will show you a quadruped long since extinct.

### REBUS.



## REBUS.



## HIDDEN PARTS OF A BUILDING.

1. No one should be a miser.
2. It is a shame to shun the poor.
3. Did you ever see a vessel wrecked?
4. You will find your uncle at home.
5. One who is uncivil is illbred.
6. I bought some meal at Chandler's.
7. Oh! what fine potatoes! I will take a bushel for Father.
8. Stop! O stop! that idle talk!

## PUZZLE.

I AM useful on the farm, and on shipboard. Transpose me, and I am not out of place on your tables. Change me to my original form, and remove my middle, and I become a part of your face. What am I?

## ANSWERS TO RIDDLES AND PUZZLES IN THE DECEMBER NUMBER.

## CLASSICAL DIAMOND PUZZLE.—Narcissus.

N  
P A N  
L A R E S  
A G A C L E S  
N A R C I S S U S  
T H E S E U S  
B E S S I  
F U R  
S

## CHARADE.—Season.

HIDDEN SQUARE WORDS.— z e s t  
e c h o  
s h o w  
t o w n

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC.—Diamond-Emerald.

D	—anub—	E
I	—te—	M
A	—rtic—	E
M	—urder—	R
O	—lla Podrid—	A
N	—umera—	L
D	—avi—	D

## ELLIPSES.

(Fill the blanks with the same words transposed.)

1. He sits and ——— over his ———.
2. The poor child could only ——— through her ———.
3. They kept on the ——— so as to ——— their position.
4. With his ——— he killed three ———.
5. ——— sometimes wound worse than the ———.
6. The ——— flew to the ——— for shelter.
7. The ——— was walking on the ———.
8. She was very clean, and had much ———.

## STAR PUZZLE.

ARRANGE eight words, having the following significations, so as to read the same up and down, vertically; east and west, horizontally; and, diagonally, right and left, up and down:

1. To indent.
2. To put on.
3. To broach.
4. To marry.
5. Extremity.
6. To bend the head.
7. Convenient.
8. Moisture.

## DECAPITATION.

IN summer's heat and winter's cold,  
I'm worn by many, young and old;  
Cut off my head, and then behold!  
I'm better far than finest gold,  
And never bought, and never sold.

## CHARADE.

MY first can be a useful slave,  
Obedient to your will;  
Yet let him once the master be,  
He'll ruin, rage, and kill.

To do my second through the air  
All men have tried in vain,  
And yet it may be often seen  
Upon your window-pane.

My whole on summer nights is seen  
A fairy lamp to light the green.

## SQUARE REMAINDERS.— T—rue

T—urn

L—end

## REBUS.—Napoleon. (Nap-pole-on.)

PICTORIAL DOUBLE ACROSTIC.—Plum-tree: Parrot, ladder, umbrage, mule.

POSITIVES AND COMPARATIVES.—1. Charge, charger. 2. Scamp, scamper. 3. Lad, ladder. 4. Tell, teller. 5. Barb, barber. 6. Din, dinner.

## PUZZLE.—Curious Epitaph:

The milk of human kindness was my own dear cherub wife;  
I'll never find another one as good in all my life.  
She blossomed, she blossomed, she decayed,  
And under this tree her body is laid.

SEVERAL of our young friends have sent answers to the Geographical Rebus and other puzzles, and we were glad to hear from them all.

Johnny A., F. E. M., N. O. P., L. P., A. F. E., and A. W. are correct in their answers. O. A. W. and "New Yorkers" sent the longest lists of names in answer to the Geographical Rebus.

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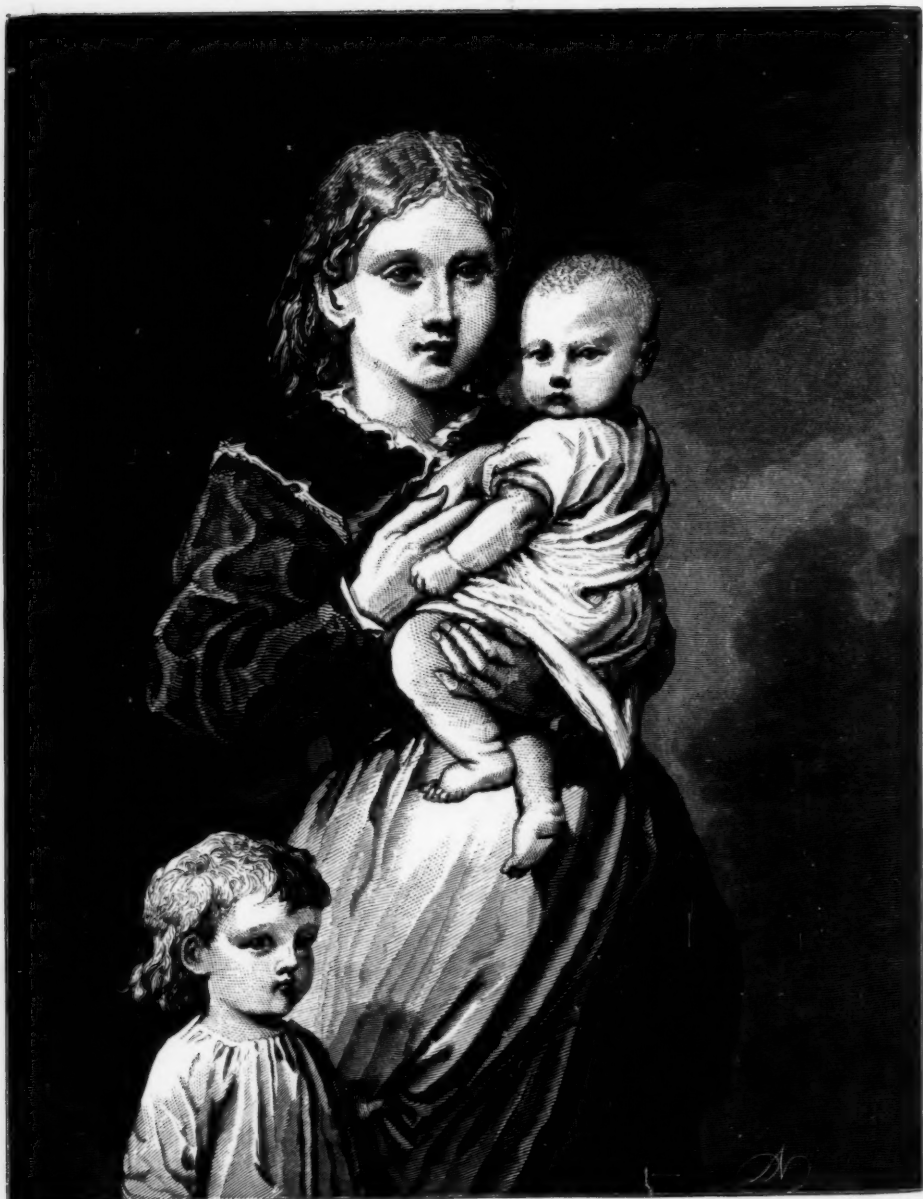
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FROM A DRAWING BY W. BROOKS.

ENGRAVED BY DAVID NICHOLS.

IN SISTER'S CARE.

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